THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA No.1 FOR SATURN

ISSUE 18 £2.75
APRIL 1997



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DUKE NUKEM 3D

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

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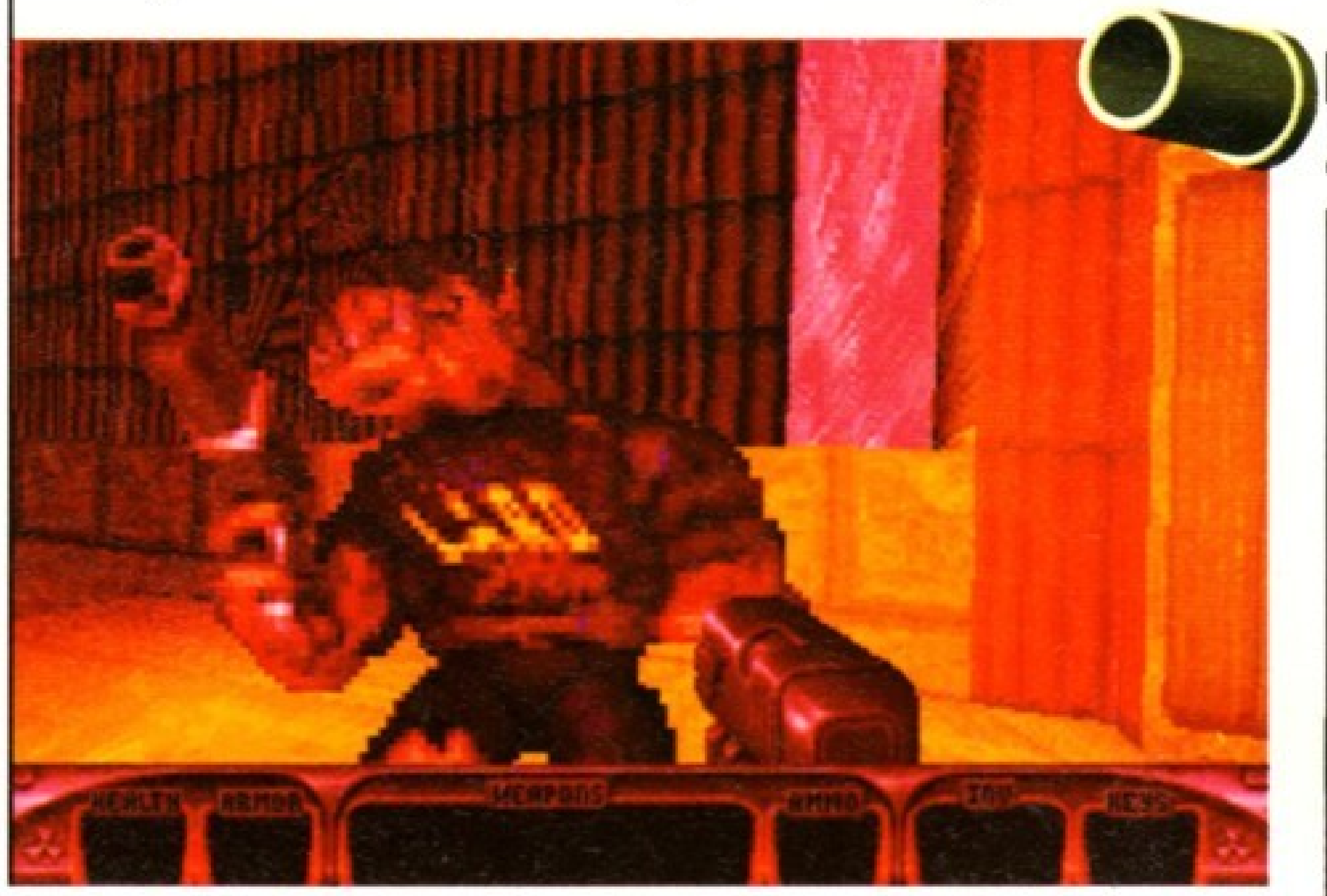
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PREVIEWS

REVIEWS

REGULARS

TIPS SPECIALS



NEWS

My god! Words alone cannot describe the power of this month's SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. I'm particularly happy with our world exclusive Duke Nukem 3D feature, which goes behind the scenes of what is going to be one of 1997's hottest games... on any home console. The news isn't too shabby either, and features-wise, you can't get much better than an in-depth interview with Tetsuya Mizuguchi - the creator of Sega Rally, Manx TT (also in this issue) and Sega Touring Car Championship. If you think this is good, well you ain't seen nothing yet. If all of our plans come to fruition, you can expect some frankly amazing stuff... coming soon. In the meantime, I'm going to give you my personal guarantee that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will continue to be your finest videogame read each and every month. Not only that, but I also reckon that we'll easily being able to provide you with the cheapest demo discs... and they'll all be of the HIGHEST quality. Oh yes.

Richard Leadbetter,
Editor



RESIDENT EVIL: FIRST SATURN SHOTS

Saturn Resident Evil promises to include far, far more than the PlayStation original. More details in the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE!



On these pages, you'll find the first Saturn shots of Resident Evil. There's only three of them, but rest assured that they are the only SATURN shots of the game that Capcom of Japan have released to the press. Any others you might have seen are merely PlayStation shots.

How do we know this? Well, Capcom of Japan held a special press conference for the Resident Evil series in Japan on February 17, where they discussed the Saturn version of their seminal classic, along with their plans for Resident Evil 2 on the PlayStation.

The programmer of the Saturn version was on hand to tell the vast assemblage of journalists about his work and he was most enthusiastic indeed about their achievements to date. The screenshots show a game that is virtually identical to the PlayStation original, a fact that he was extremely proud of. But it gets better... After the original Sony game was complete, the developers at Capcom came up with the idea of producing a enhanced version of the game internally dubbed BioHazard Dash (BioHazard is the Japanese moniker for Resident Evil). This version of the game would feature many small tweaks to the gameplay along with changes to the plot of the original game.

Well, despite the Dash edition never reaching the shelves, Capcom held on to the ideas and they are all included in the forthcoming Saturn version of the game! So, yes, yes, yes and yes - the Saturn version will be superior to the PlayStation game.

One downer concerns the release of the game. Despite the fact that adverts have appeared in the Japanese press, Resident Evil has been put back until the summer. Now that could mean anything from June to September, but knowing Capcom's release strategies, that probably means closer to September!

As for the rest of the press conference, Capcom stated that PlayStation Resident Evil 2 has been taken back right to the beginning of its development cycle. The entire plot and setting is being completely changed and RE2's release has slipped from spring to winter '97!

Rumours persist that the sequel is also being converted to Saturn. There was no official confirmation of this at the press conference, probably because of the huge delay the PlayStation version has encountered. However, the possibility remains likely.





These are the first Saturn Resident Evil shots in the world.



QUAKE: EXCLUSIVE NEWS SENSATION!

Recently, Sega of America finally got around to announcing that it had licensed three major products from GT Interactive. Abe's Oddysee was revealed last month, Duke Nukem 3D is exclusively unveiled in this issue. Now details have finally emerged regarding Quake, possibly the most exciting game of the bunch.

Although there has been no official confirmation from any division of Sega yet, it would appear that Lobotomy Software have been handed the conversion work, with the conversion to be handed in literally weeks after the team have completed Duke Nukem 3D (see the Coming Soon starting on page 14). We had some inkling that Lobotomy might be carrying out the translation, hence the inclusion of some Quake-based questions in the Duke interview this issue - and they do mention that they are currently in the process of producing another 3D Saturn game.

As far back as issue #13, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has been pressing "the powers that be" that Lobotomy are just about the only team in the world capable of producing an excellent Quake conversion. The fact that Sega of America has realised this is great news for Saturn fans, especially when it becomes evident that the previous team handling Saturn Quake were encountering severe speed and frame rate difficulties with the conversion. When it comes to 3D corridor games, no-one knows the Saturn's capabilities better than Lobotomy. Expect to see the first set of screenshots EXCLUSIVELY in a forthcoming issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE.









While it's unlikely that Saturn Quake will have quite the resolution of the PC version (pictured), you can be assured that it will be a game of the highest quality thanks to Lobotomy Software. Obviously their engine will need a bit of work in order to produce the luvverly shadows and what-have-you, but you can be assured that there is no-one more qualified to carry out the conversion. Let's hope there's a two-machine link-up mode...



VF3 RUMOURS CONTINUE

Barely a week can go by without some new Virtua Fighter 3 based rumour hitting the Internet. As SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has stated month in, month out, don't believe anything you hear unless it comes direct from Yu Suzuki, head of AM2. Still, this month's set of rumours are most intriguing, with Core Design apparently having seen the mythical cart upgrade in action on a recent visit to Japan (witnessing a two character VF3 demo no less), with the company so impressed as to be planning compatibility with the forthcoming Tomb Raider 2. Internet sites have also continually gone on about some March press conference being held by Yu Suzuki wherein the first demos of VF3 would be unveiled... Well, this would be two years after the first VF2 demos, but our enquiries to Sega of Japan resulted in a "what press conference?" response... Well, if anything's going to happen we should have news of it in the following issue of SSM.

GREMLIN BUY IMAGITEC

Gremlin's support of the Saturn has been firmly established over recent months with titles such as Loaded, Hardcore 4x4, Euro '96 and the excellent Actua Golf. Well, the good news is that the company has recently purchased Imagitec, which now goes by the name of Gremlin Interactive Studios and now handles most of the company's conversion work, starting with ReLoaded. Further titles to look forward to include a new version of Actua Soccer (aka Euro '96), this time based on national clubs, plus a six-course Actua Golf follow-up. All of Gremlin's forthcoming biggies, including the arcade style Arms Race plus the potentially excellent Actua Soccer 2, are also bound for Saturn and should appear within weeks of the PlayStation versions.

SSM RULES!

We'll just fill out this space by telling you about our latest set of sales figures... Our recently released ABC figure shows SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE gaining a gargantuan 35% rise in readership, taking us up from around 22,000 to 30,140. As you would expect it's a sad day for the once decent Sega Power, slipping down to 11,434, a loss of around 30%. The SSM team have great plans for the magazine in order to make it better still, including some utterly awesome stuff lined up for the summer which is so cool we can barely believe it ourselves! Thanks for your support over the last few months and stick with us - the best is yet to be!

SSM IN NEW DEMO DISC FRENZY!!!

Next issue in SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE we'll be bringing you an amazing cover-mounted CD that other magazines could only dream of. Rather than bung out a one level demo CD every month of a single game and charge an extortionate amount of money for it, we've waited patiently for a bumper crop of games to feature on one of our best cover-mounted CDs to date.

SEGA FLASH VOLUME #4 features three excellent playable demos of some of Sega's latest releases and a vast amount of FMV footage featuring some of the hottest titles around. Take a look what's in store...

PLAYABLE LEVELS

SONIC 3D BLAST

After waiting for what seems an eternity, the long awaited debut of Sonic on the Saturn is an enhanced version of the Mega Drive hit Sonic 3D: Flicky's Island. Adding an isometric twist to the previous Sonic formula and with an all new style of gameplay, it may well not be the Sonic title that Saturn owners wanted but a fine game nevertheless. One of the highlights is the Sonic 2 style special stages featuring a light-sourced polygon Sonic running through the tube sections collecting rings. These parts were actually coded by the Sonic Team, hopefully an indication of what's to come later in the year.
WHAT YOU GET: The whole of the first level is playable including the excellent special stage featuring Knuckles.



DIE HARD ARCADE

Originally produced by AM1 in the arcades using Sega's ST-V "Titan" software, the Saturn conversion is pixel perfect. In similar vein to Streets of Rage, it's a scrolling 3D beat 'em up where the player uses the familiar punch and kick combos to defeat the hordes of bad guys who have kidnapped the President's daughter. All manner of weapons from a broom to a rocket launcher can be used as you wander around from one scene to another in an attempt to thwart the enemy. It makes an excellent break from your average beat 'em up and it's frankly excellent!



WHAT YOU GET: The first few scenes of the game and some cool weapons to collect. You'll have some ace fun with this one, we tell you!

VIRTUAL ON

Back by popular public demand, Sega's one-on-one robot blaster features some of the best 3D graphics and involving gameplay ever witnessed on the Saturn. Technically outstanding with two split screen set ups for some awesome two-player battles, we liked it so much it received a massive 93%. Though a little confusing at first with a complex control system, once you've discovered the various tactics and strategies it becomes amazingly compelling. If you don't own it already, this playable demo should convince you to buy it this instant!
WHAT YOU GET: Battle as any of the robots on the hardest difficulty level against the first robot. The cool intro's in there too!



PLUS FULL-MOTION VIDEO!

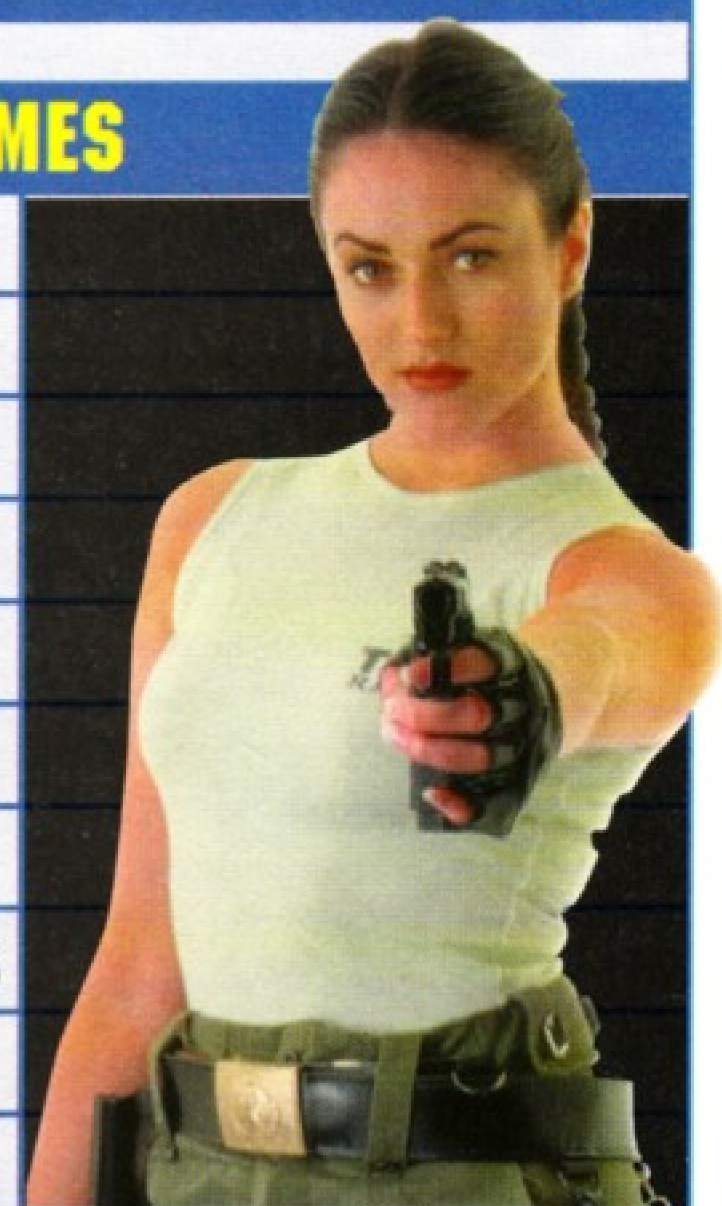
As if three playable demos weren't enough to keep you occupied, Sega Flash 4 features a huge amount of full-motion video demos too! Coool!

Sega Flash volume #4 appears on next month's edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, price £4.50. Unfortunately, the CD is not available on issues of the magazine sold outside of the United Kingdom.

BLOCKBUSTER CHARTS

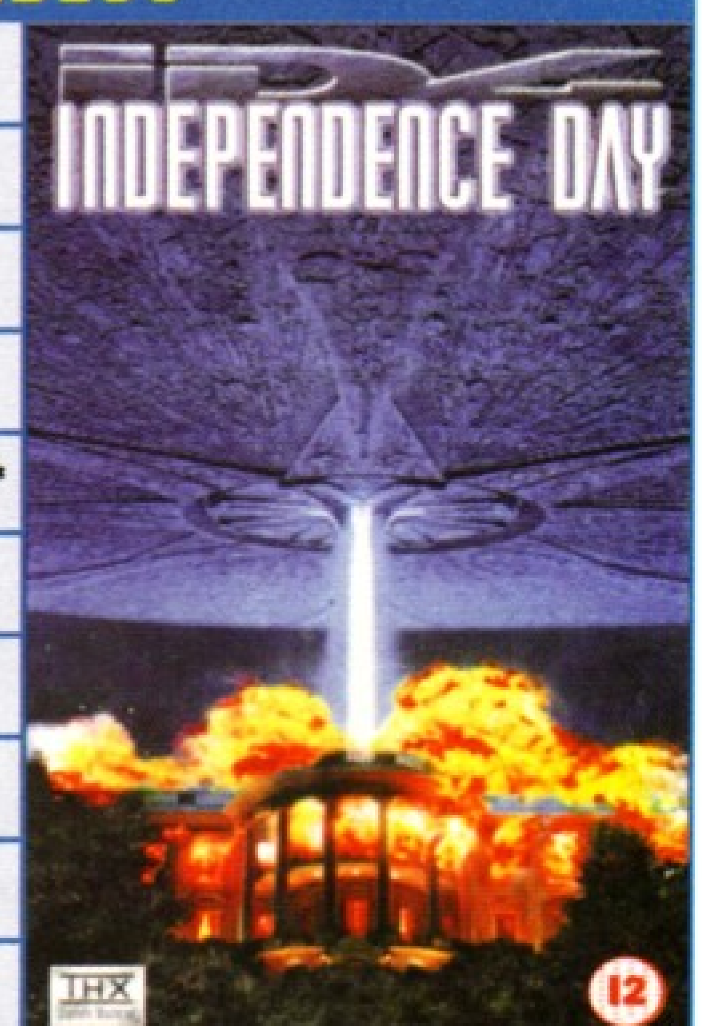
TOP TEN VIDEO GAMES

1	DOOM*
2	DESTRUCTION DERBY
3	TOMB RAIDER
4	EXHUMED
5	NIGHTS
6	ALIEN TRILOGY
7	WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97
8	ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3
9	TITAN WARS
10	GUARDIAN HEROES



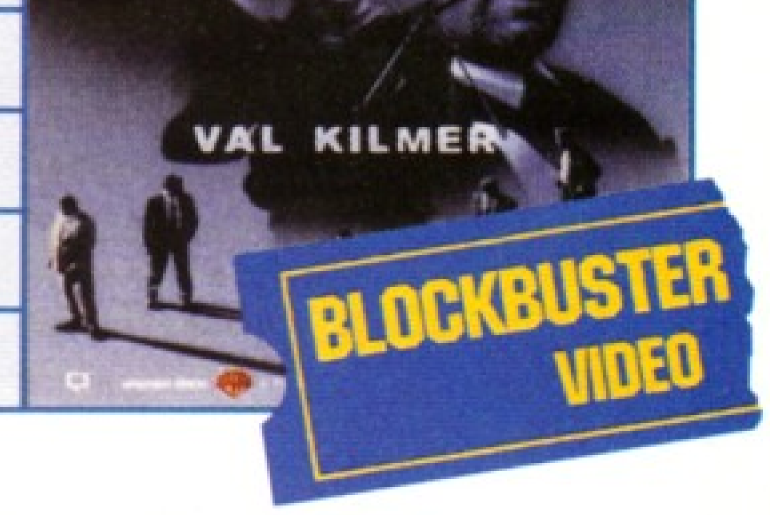
TOP TEN RENTAL VIDEOS

1	INDEPENDENCE DAY*
2	MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
3	THE ROCK
4	LAST MAN STANDING*
5	TRUTH ABOUT CAT & DOGS*
6	COPYCAT
7	FROM DUSK TILL DAWN
8	EXECUTIVE DECISION
9	TWELVE MONKEYS
10	DIABOLIQUE*



TOP TEN RETAIL VIDEOS

1	INDEPENDENCE DAY*
2	ALADDIN: KING OF THIEVES
3	TOY STORY
4	HEAT
5	101 DALMATIONS
6	SEVEN
7	BRAVEHEART
8	FATHER OF THE BRIDE 2*
9	TRAINSPOTTING
10	BABE



*** DENOTES NEW ENTRY**


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HMV CHARTS

Week ending November 29th

Send us your top ten games and you could be mentioned in this small but significant space next month! You also get a game for your trouble! How lovely! Send 'em to READER CHARTS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. This month's reader chart comes from Gehan Pathiraja of Brighton who gets a game despite mentioning Soviet Strike which isn't out at the time of writing!

	HMV CHARTS		SATURN MAGAZINE CHARTS		READER CHARTS
1	DARK SAVIOR	1	VIRTUA FIGHTER 3 (coin-op)	1	VIRTUAL ON/ PANZER ZWEI
2	DIE HARD ARCADE	2	VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (Saturn)	2	SOVIET STRIKE
3	SEGA AGES VOLUME 1	3	MANX TT SUPERBIKE	3	SEGA RALLY
4	SONIC 3D	4	FIGHTERS MEGAMIX	4	WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97
5	TOMB RAIDER	5	ELEVATOR ACTION RETURNS	5	VIRTUA COP 2
6	VIRTUA COP 2	6	DARK SAVIOR	6	TOMB RAIDER
7	STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2	7	EXHUMED	7	NiGHTS
8	COMMAND AND CONQUER	8	STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2	8	MADDEN '97
9	WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97	9	TOMB RAIDER	9	VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
10	DAYTONA CCE	10	SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	10	STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2





GRAB SOME RADICAL AIR

After the deluge of skiing and snow boarding games that have recently invaded our arcades, it was only natural that this craze would filter down to the super consoles. Zap! Snow Boarding Trix is the first to appear on the Saturn and allows players to catch some "rad air" or "mad aerials", dude.

There are two distinct playing modes featured in the game. The first is the race mode which allows you to race one-on-one with another baggy clothed boarder down the side of a slippery mountain on a glorified plank of wood risking life and limb to become the snow boarding champion. Three different courses are available to race on and with a choice of three different boarders each with varying speed and cornering abilities.The second mode is the tricks section, where you career down a straight slope with all manner of jumps and ramps allowing you to perform various snow boarding trickery. Points are awarded for each trick you pull off and can be entered in the high score table for you to come back to and beat.

Comparisons will no doubt be made with the PlayStation title Cool Boarders and as such ZAP! Snow Boarding Trix looks as though it could well surpass it, with better movement in the boarders, better clipping and more freedom on the courses too. Although already available in Japan, as of yet it is undecided as to whether this will receive an official UK release. Hopefully more news on this soon.



If this warrants more attention...



... We'll stick it in the Big in Japan next issue.

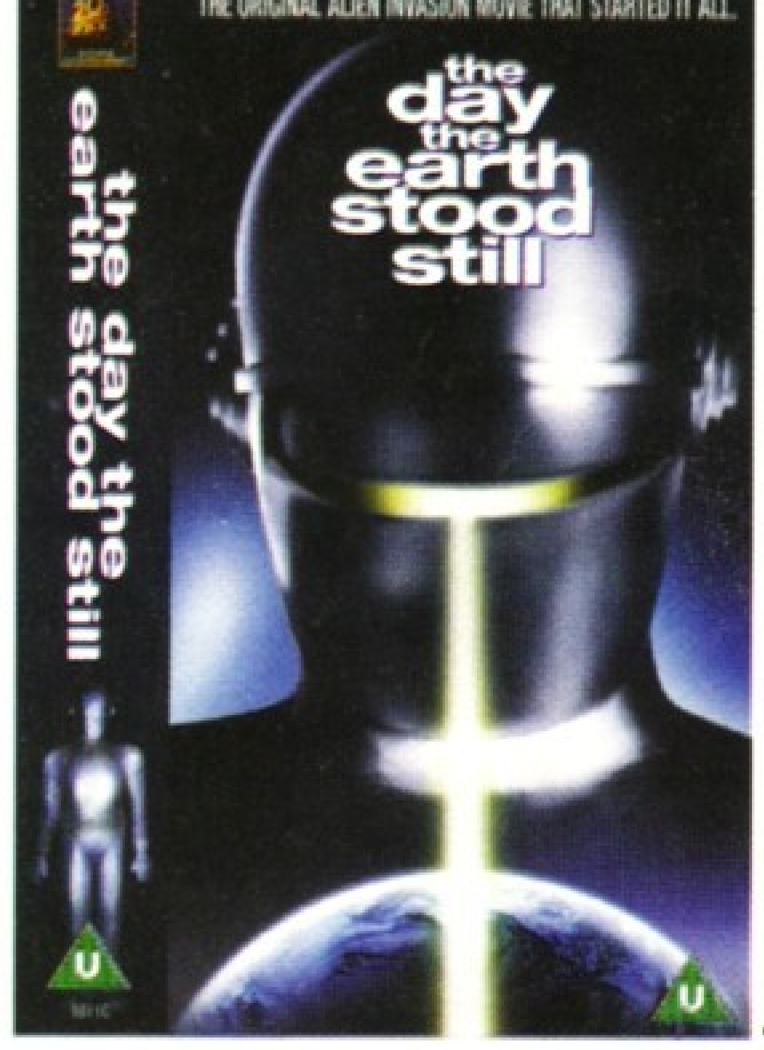
WIN ID4 ON VIDEO!

FIVE COPIES OF INDEPENDENCE DAY UP FOR GRABS PLUS FIVE COPIES OF THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL!

You've watched the movie, you've played the game now win the video! Yes Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment are offering five lucky winners a chance to get their mitts on a copy of Independence Day, the 1996 box office smash that's selling even faster than the latest issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE (only just mind). ID4 features some of the most amazing special effects ever seen, is THX digitally remastered and is available to buy in both Fullscreen (£15.99) and Widescreen (£16.99). As if that wasn't enough Fox are also also giving away five copies of the classic 1950's sci-fi film, The Day the Earth Stood Still to complete your collection of alien invasion-type flicks. To win a copy of both videos just answer this brain-draining question:

ID4 star Jeff Goldblum is due to star in which prehistoric movie sequel this summer?

If you think you know the answer send your entries to the usual address and mark them KLAATU, BARADA, NIKTO! Correct answers will be drawn at random and each winner will receive a copy of both Independence Day and The Day the Earth Stood Still on video.






SO!
IF YOU PLAY GAMES?
YOU'RE GONNA NEED THIS!
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computer and video games
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SNK SEGA SENSATION #1: METAL SLUG!

SNK continue in their endeavours to bring their finest Neo Geo arcade wares to the Sega Saturn. Their latest announcement concerns Metal Slug - their popular side-scrolling shooting game (for one or two players), released on Neo Geo in the summer of last year. Metal Slug is one of the most playable, enjoyable shoot 'em ups released last year. It combines elements of Contra and Gunstar Heroes and adds in a very healthy (some might say a bit sick actually) sense of humour. It also happens to contain some awesome power-up weaponry and plenty of bosses to blast through, as you can see from some of the shots on these pages. There seems to be a bit of a gap between Japanese and European SNK releases (like try ten years - if we're lucky), so we can't be sure as to when this game will appear on this side of the world... if at all. But rest assured, we will be investigating. In the meantime, here are some lovely screenshots to enjoy.



Metal Slug is ace fun in the arcades and on Neo Geo... and it's coming to Saturn!







SEGA RETRO PACK: ROUND TWO

According to the latest HMV charts, Sega Ages volume #1 is still selling really well - not too bad considering that the three games on the CD are all over a decade old! Well, in Japan, Sega have not let the Sega Ages brand die down. No sir. In keeping with their single-game-at-a-budget-price policy, they've just released the seminal Fantasy Zone for about £20 and have also produced a retro pack of reeeeeally old Sega coin-ops, going under the name of Memorial Selection Volume #1.

This brilliant pack has titles such as Up and Down, Head On and Pengo included along with Flicky - one of the most playable platform games in existence (and which spawned Sonic 3D: Flicky's Island). Sega Europe aren't sure whether these games would meet with the same interest level outside of Japan and an official release is looking doubtful. However, that's not to say that the games might not appear elsewhere, just as Deep Scan appeared as a mini-extra on the Die Hard Arcade CD. We'll keep you posted.







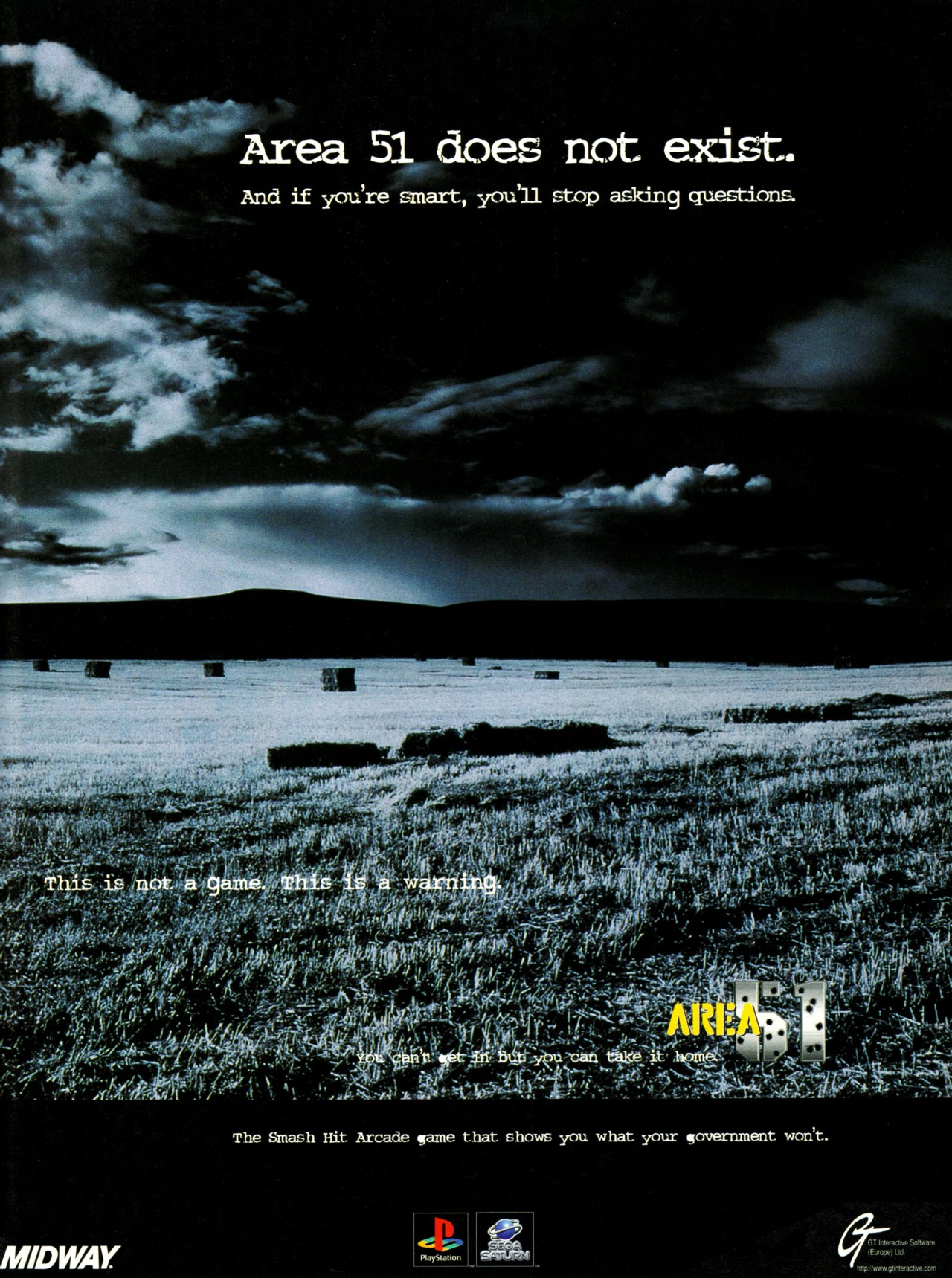


SNK SEGA SENSATION #2: KING OF FIGHTERS '96





SNK have released a new King of Fighters game in Japan. King of Fighters '96 actually comes in three different formats. The first, CD only, has long loading times and reduced animation. It's worth coughing up the extra for the RAM cart rendition of the game, which boosts the Saturn's internal memory by 33%, thus enabling every frame of animation from the coin-op to be included. The final version of the game is the ROM cart edition, which reduces loading time (it's all automatically on the cart). This maybe faster, but it only works with KoF '96. The good thing about getting the RAM edition is that the cart works with other games, notably Real Bout Fatal Fury and Capcom's forthcoming CyberBots. But still, onto the game proper. The good news is that King of Fighters '96 is much, much more of a sequel than '95 was. The last version was great, but it only had a few new moves and characters. Not so this latest edition, which features all-new graphics and radically different moves lists for the established characters. The SNK tradition of awesome quality backgrounds and superior music is also continued in this fine game. Of course, us European gamers are still waiting for an official release of KoF '95. Well it would appear that Sony have signed up some kind of lock-out agreement for Europe, meaning that the inferior non-cart PlayStation version will appear some months ahead of the Saturn game. SSM's advice to Sega would be: forget about '95 and get '96 instead!



Area 51 does not exist.
And if you're smart, you'll stop asking questions.
This is not a game. This is a warning.
AREA 51
You can't get in but you can take it home.
The Smash Hit Arcade game that shows you what your government won't.
MIDWAY
PlayStation
SEGA SATURN
GT Interactive Software (Europe) Ltd.
http://www.gtinteractive.com

Duke Nukem 3D



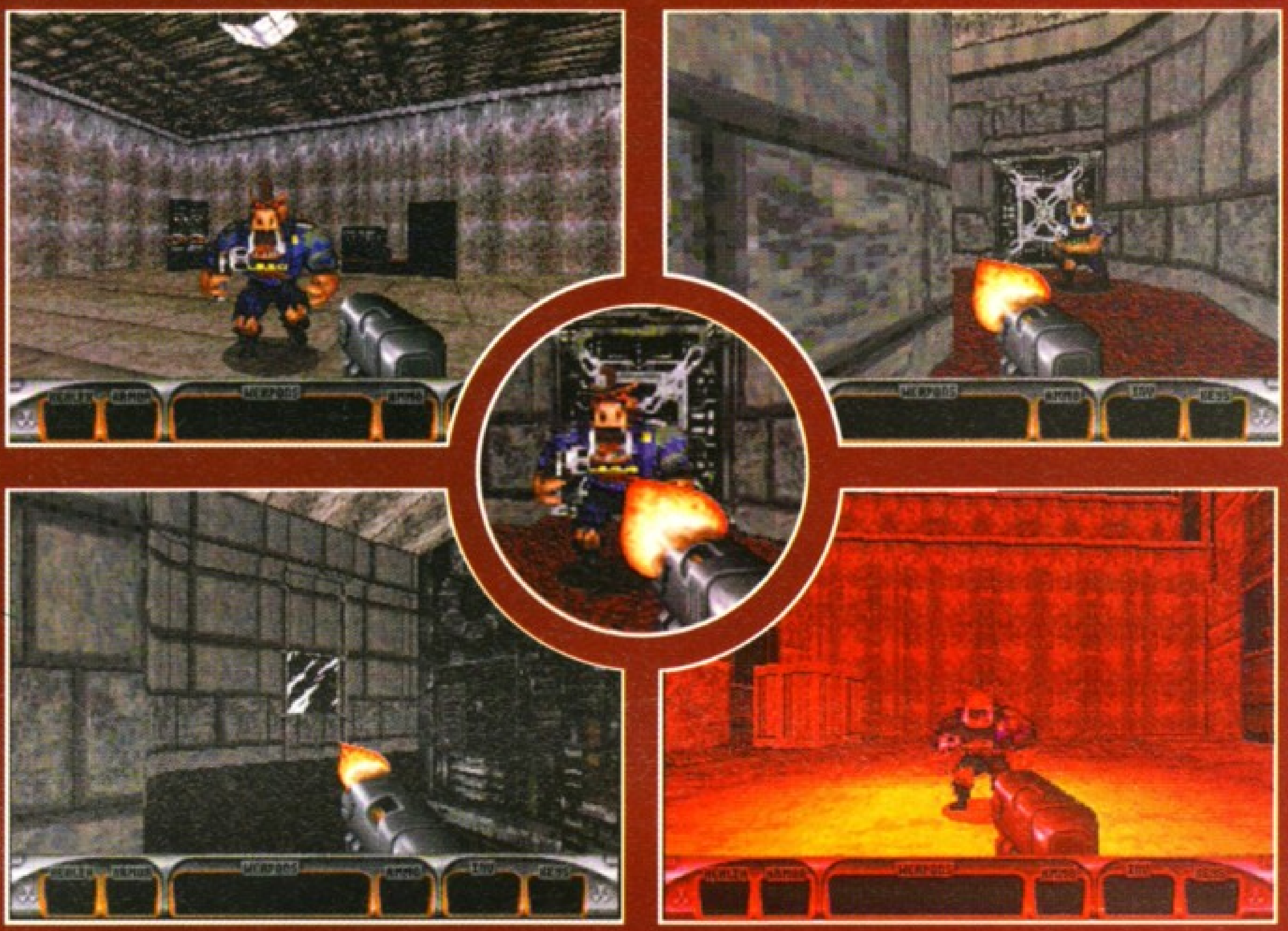
One of the most popular PC games of the last year was 3D Realms' stunning Duke Nukem 3D, the only game to actually improve on the incredible Doom 2 before id software released the awesome Quake. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE has the first news - and the first screen-shots - of the potentially mind-blowing Saturn conversion! RICH LEADBETTER reports.

Id software are single-handedly responsible for the making the first person perspective blasting genre what it is today. It was Doom that pushed back the boundaries of gaming excellence, practically inventing the "corridor game" style and none could better id at their own game.

Well, maybe not. You see, in mid-1996 a company called 3D Realms released the final version of Duke Nukem 3D. The game was brilliant, featuring super-smooth, incredibly detailed 3D graphics, a range of awesome weaponry plus unforgettable multiplayer action. 3D Realms upped the stakes in the corridor genre by actually making their backgrounds look like real places as opposed to the repetitive corridors and caves that Doom had provided. It also had a somewhat... dodgy... sense of humour. Plenty of swearing via the wonders of DukeSpeak plus naked ladies being blown up, that kind of thing.

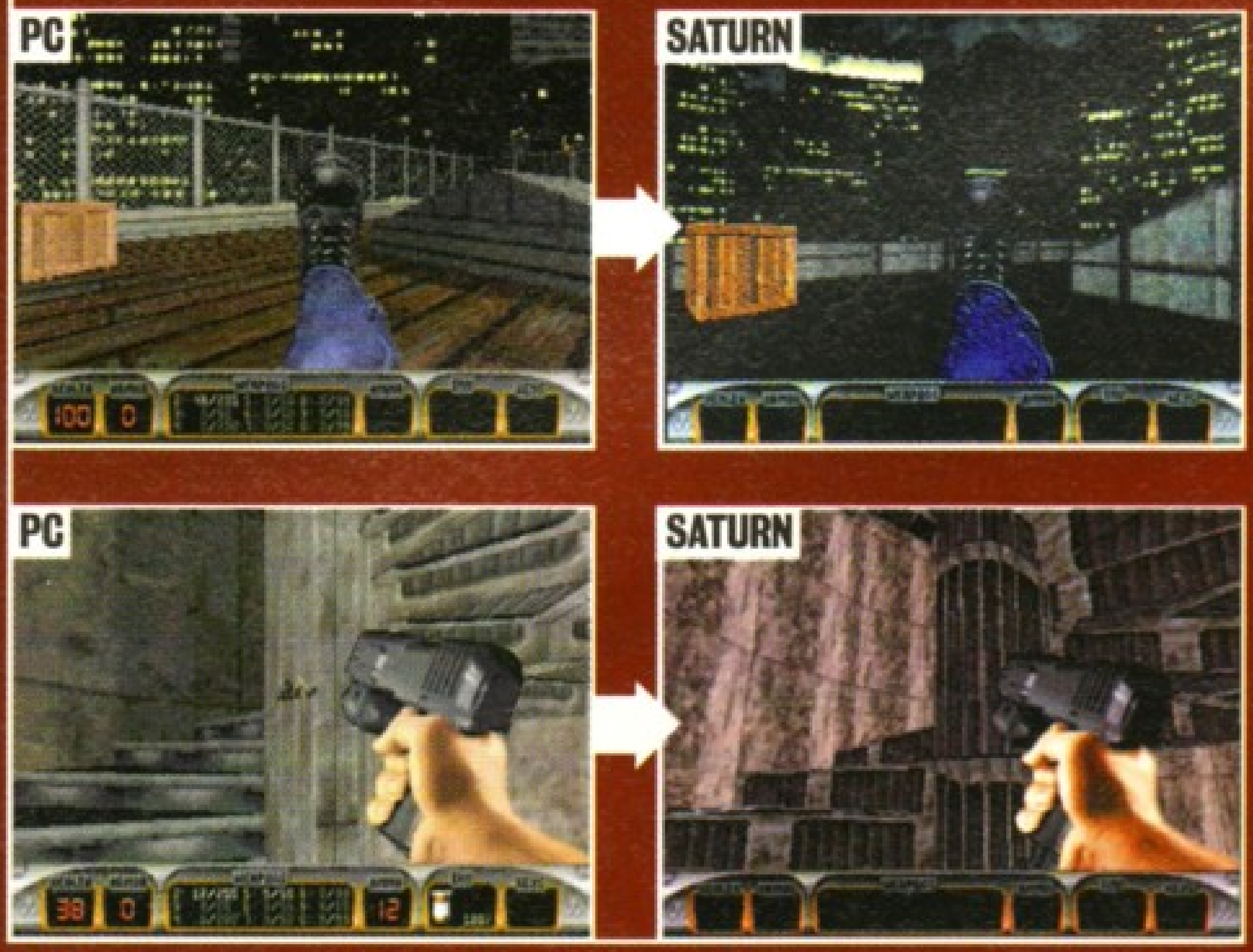
GT Interactive had the cunning idea of bringing Duke Nukem 3D to the consoles - an idea they touted at the last E3 show, before the full version of the PC game was actually released! Up until the end of last year, no-one had any idea who

Duke Nukem's entire range of weaponry will be packed into the Sega Saturn conversion. In the current demo only two of the PC version's weapons are in there (the foot and the pistol), but there's no reason why the rocket launchers, devastators, shrink rays and pipe bombs shouldn't be in the Saturn game.



IT'S ALREADY LOOKING VEEERY CLOSE...

Despite the fact that the current Duke Nukem demo doesn't even feature a complete level of the PC original, it's still looking very, very close indeed. What we've done here is to show a shot from the current, extremely early Saturn version and compare it alongside a shot of the completely finished PC game. As you can see, already Lobotomy have performed wonders with the Saturn conversion... and they haven't even started properly yet! Expect big, big things from this game! The best people for the job are behind the conversion of one of the best PC games in existence.



was actually going to carry out the conversion work.

There was talk of UK's Eurocom, a talented bunch of coders responsible for Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 (amongst others) producing the conversions, but nothing was set in stone... until December last year when the identity of the programmers was finally revealed!

ENTER... LOBOTOMY!

People's limited expectations of what the Saturn was capable of when it came to "corridor genre" games were exploded when Lobotomy Software revealed Exhumed (known as PowerSlave in the US) to the world. This little-known American company had seemingly done the impossible with the Saturn - they had produced a super-smooth 3D environment with stunning light-sourcing effects.

After months of people moaning about the Saturn's inability to match the PlayStation in terms of special effects, Lobotomy proved everyone wrong in a single stroke. Much was made of the lighting effects in PlayStation Doom, but any Exhumed player will tell you that the awesome dynamic lighting effects in the Lobotomy title are far, far superior.

In SSM editorials we petitioned "the powers that be" for Lobotomy to convert across a game like Duke Nukem or Quake. It would appear that someone listened as it would be announced just before Christmas that the group would be converting Duke to the Saturn. The world trembled!

HERE IT IS... SATURN DUKE NUKEM 3D!

Sega Europe took delivery of a very early playable demo of Saturn Duke Nukem 3D in late January and were so excited by the quality of Lobotomy's efforts that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE was instantly summoned to witness this potentially brilliant game. Unless otherwise stated, every shot here is a Saturn one!

What we have to make very, very clear is just how early work on the game is at the moment. Lobotomy have literally just got to grips with the project and are in the throes of ripping the PC version to pieces, seeing how it ticks and then integrating the levels and gameplay into an enhanced version of the Exhumed engine.

The demo we've played on features an early rendition of Duke Nukem 3D's first LA Apocalypse level and it's from this demo that you'll find numerous screenshots accompanying this feature. Despite Lobotomy only being on the case for a couple of weeks (at the time of writing) they've already done an admirable job with the conversion. The detail isn't all there at this time, but the major landmarks are in and looking great, plus as you would expect from Lobotomy, the feel on the controls and the sheer speed and fluidity of it all is frankly brilliant.

IT'S EARLY... BUT ACE ALREADY!

Lobotomy have coded in just two of the game's myriad weapons so far. They are the Mighty Foot (which Duke uses to kick the crap out of the alien scum) plus the basic hand gun. This fires off twelve low-power rounds before Duke has to reload.

There's no reason why the full game shouldn't include all of the tools from the PC version, so look out for shotguns, rocket >>

What the screenshots can't show you is just how smooth and fluid Saturn Duke Nukem is. Lobotomy reckon that the finished article should run just as fast as Exhumed, but will have far, far more detail and more impressive lighting. NiGHTS analogue pad compatibility is in too.

The City Street level is the very first to be found in the PC original and it's the first that Lobotomy have transferred across onto the Saturn. Mark our words: this will be an incredible game!



"I can tell you that what you have seen of Duke on the Saturn is just the beginning, and what you'll end up seeing will blow you away!" – Paul Lange, Lobotomy

>> launcher, pulse rifles, shrink rays, freezing guns plus the pride of Duke's arsenal: the glove-mounted Devastators!

Similarly, Duke Nukem has a vast array of different creatures to do battle with. At the moment, just the LA pig police sergeant has been coded in to populate the level. Again, there's no reason why the entire cast of supporting meanies from the PC version shouldn't make their way into the Saturn version.

One thing we did notice even in the early demo is that the definition of the enemy sprites is very good indeed. Even close-up, when monster usually become huge amounts of blocky pixels, Duke Saturn's meanies still look very cool indeed.

BETTER THAN THE PC VERSION?

Lobotomy Software are rightly proud of the 3D engine they have created for the Sega Saturn. Many people actually think that the engine is a port-over of the Duke Nukem 3D PC engine, because they have so much in common. Truth be told, this just isn't the case. It's actually better.

Like the PC Duke Nukem "Build" engine it can handle true 3D environments (such as rooms on top of rooms, something you don't see in Hexen or Doom), but Lobotomy's engine has been optimised to include some amazing lighting effects. The latter levels of Exhumed show this off perfectly and even in the early Duke Nukem demo, Lobotomy are experimenting with incorporating these lighting effects. You can see this in some of the screenshots of the Saturn version we've printed.

The PC version didn't have dynamic lighting quite like this (it was far more Doom-like in this regard), so even if the Saturn version does lose some detail, it could still look a lot nicer thanks to the additional special effects. We'll be taking a look at later versions of Duke Nukem 3D, so keep reading the pages of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE for definitive information!

Lobotomy have just started modelling the first level of Duke Nukem 3D in the Saturn demo in the possession of Sega. As you can see the decrepit old cinema is looking very close indeed to the PC original – and with the new light sourcing and what-not, the finished article should be utterly superb.



HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

How did Lobotomy Software come up with a 3D engine so far in advance of what other companies have achieved? For starters, their engine wasn't ported across from any other system, unlike Doom and Hexen. This enabled them to use the Saturn's hardware to its greatest extent.

Inside the Saturn there are two separate video chips, known as VDP1 and VDP2 in addition to two central CPUs. This arrangement can cause programmers many headaches, but in the right hands it means computational power far in excess of what the PlayStation is capable.

Lobotomy's engine concentrates on handing out tasks to whatever chip is most capable. One of the Saturn's CPUs in conjunction with VDP1 produces the walls of the environment on-screen. The other CPU handles just about everything else related to the game whilst VDP2 (best suited to 2D applications) just draws the weapons and the parallax sky.

The beauty of this system is speed. Lobotomy's engine can reach 30 frames per second, the same as Alien Trilogy, but with superior special effects and more detailed environments. And no crappy darkening effects two feet away from you - with Lobotomy's engine you can see waaaaay into the distance!



The PC version of Duke Nukem 3D was pretty spectacular, but the Saturn version should prove to be better still thanks to the supreme coding competence of Lobotomy Software. In the screenshot above, you get some idea of what kind of dynamic lighting they're planning to put into Saturn Duke Nukem. In the early demo, you see this red-out blast effect whenever one of the meanies fires at you. Considering how good Exhumed was, we should be seeing something pretty damn awesome in this potentially ace conversion! Look out for further Saturn Duke updates in forthcoming issues of SSM!






These are only very rough models of the levels in the Saturn Duke demo. The PC version had quite a bit more detailage and you can expect just about all of it in the Sega game.

LOBOTOMY INTERVIEWED!
DUKE NUKEM PLANS REVEALED!

In a world exclusive, Lobotomy Software kindly agreed to be interviewed by SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE and revealed the full extent of their incredible plans for the Saturn version of Duke Nukem 3D! Read on, and prepare to get most excited indeed... Interview by RICH LEADBETTER

SSM What are your thoughts on the PC version of Duke Nukem 3D?
LOBOTOMY We were developing Exhumed PC at the same time Duke was in development, so we are very familiar with the Build engine and how complex a game can be done with it, while still being very fast. Duke was designed with the intent of pure action and lots of tricks. Exhumed on the other hand is more of an action adventure that has a very different, and we think, better feel. Overall, Duke is a very cool and fun game.

SSM What did you think when you were confronted with the task of bringing the game onto the Saturn?
LOBOTOMY Can the system handle the complexities of the game and can we do it justice? We mulled this over for quite some time before we were confident we could do a killer Duke game on the Saturn. Once we reached that point of confidence, it was an opportunity we couldn't pass up. Our ultimate intention is to be the first console version of Duke, and also the best playing and best looking version available.

SSM How did Lobotomy come around to getting the assignment?
LOBOTOMY Another company had been contracted to port Duke to Saturn, but the system just couldn't handle a direct port of the Build engine and still have an adequate frame rate. When Exhumed was released for Saturn, we demonstrated an engine and game system that could run circles around other 3D corridor games. When Sega realized we had experience with Build, and had a fast 3D engine, we became the developer of choice. Luckily we had resources becoming available at the same time.

SSM Since our last interview, how has Lobotomy changed? Are you using the same core team for Duke Nukem or have you expanded?
LOBOTOMY The company hasn't changed significantly, but we are applying more resources to Duke than we have on any project we've done in the past. It's very important the game is done on time and of the highest quality possible. Basically half the company is working on Duke and the other half is working on another project.

SSM Are you working on more than one project at this time?
LOBOTOMY We are doing several projects, in that we are still putting the finishing touches on the PSX version of Exhumed, working on Duke, starting pre-production on an original Lobotomy game, and beginning production on another 3D Saturn title.

SSM There was talk of an Exhumed sequel... Are those plans on hold now?
LOBOTOMY We are still talking about doing an Exhumed sequel, but it will likely be an all-new adventure, rather than a rehashed version with different levels and a few new monsters.

SSM Are you using the Exhumed engine to run Duke Nukem 3D?
LOBOTOMY We are indeed using the Exhumed engine. It's a proven technology and performs very well. In order to handle the large expanses of open space in Duke, we had to modify the engine considerably to maintain the frame rate. We ended up implementing a "mip" level system so that the number of polygons contained on a wall are reduced as you get farther away from it. Visually you can't really tell the difference, especially when distracted by monsters trying to kill you! We also enhanced the lighting capabilities of the engine and added support for the blood splatters on the wall and various other tricks in Duke.

SSM The Exhumed engine boasts a number of impressive lighting effects which aren't present in PC Duke...
LOBOTOMY Yes all the cool lighting and effects in Exhumed will be present in Duke, but in a different way. So far the effects we have implemented are really cool. I think it will blow a lot of people away. This is one area where Saturn Duke will be superior to PC Duke.

SSM In the last interview, Ezra Dreisbach mentioned the possibility of speed increases and improved dynamic lighting. Will any of this surface in Duke Nukem 3D?
LOBOTOMY The speed of the engine is faster, but the complexity of the game is much higher. Ultimately, it will probably be a wash and the game will be similar in speed to Exhumed. As stated in an earlier question, the lighting is in many ways improved over the lighting in Exhumed. Most of it is just how the environment reacts to the use of cast lights and dynamic lighting, and the Duke setting, it will look dramatically different from the Exhumed lighting, even though the technology behind it is basically the same.

SSM Considering the differences in available memory between the PC and Saturn, will porting across any of the levels and graphics cause any difficulties?
LOBOTOMY There is a limited amount of memory available on the Saturn and we are finding creative ways to exploit all of the memory available. With Exhumed PC, using the Build engine, we went crazy using all kind of art, because the graphics cache system worked very well. We don't have that luxury on the cosoles, but thus far we have been able to deal with it effectively.

SSM Are you planning on incorporating all of the levels of the PC game? Will there be any compromises?
LOBOTOMY At this point there aren't any plans to scrap any levels. However, many of them are being massaged so as to maximize the game experience from level to level.

SSM Do you have the option to improve on the original PC game as you see fit? Team Dolls II, perhaps?
LOBOTOMY We are doing a port which by definition is as close to the original as possible. It hasn't been decided if we will offer any secrets not originally in the PC version.

SSM In terms of multi-player activities, what are you planning to do in this regard? What modes will there be?
LOBOTOMY This is something that is yet undecided. There are pros and cons for multi-player support and we are going over all of those issues right now. Obviously Netlink support would be very popular among Netlink owners.

SSM Right at this moment, what's the state of the play with the conversion from the PC to the Saturn? What have you achieved now and what's next on the list?
LOBOTOMY We are currently working over all of the levels, one at time, and putting in all the weapons and monsters. We will deal with all the interactive tricks last. It's actually fun to play right now and we've only been actively coding for a little over a month.

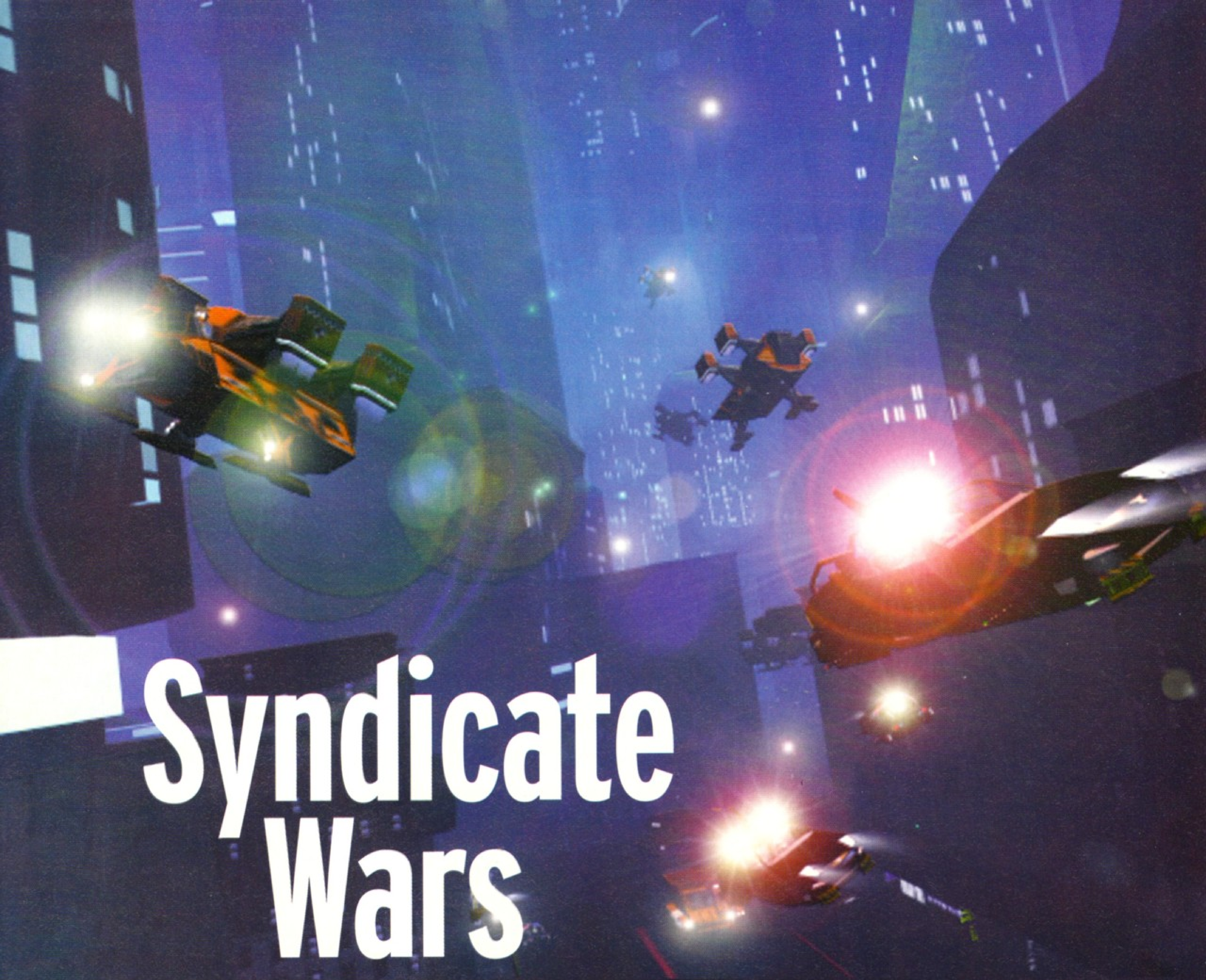
SSM At the same time that Sega revealed that they had signed up Duke Nukem, they also revealed that Quake would be heading for the Saturn at much the same time. The big question everyone is asking at the moment is, can the machine handle a proper conversion?
LOBOTOMY Quake is a very technologically demanding game. From what we know, Sega has great confidence it can be done on the Saturn, and they should know.

SSM With both games due to appear within months of one-another, does this increase the pressure on your Duke Nukem work?
LOBOTOMY We have seen the work that has been done on Quake for Saturn, and we are confident our engine is superior. That lessens some pressure, and having the engine technology in hand lets us concentrate on the game.

SSM Bearing in mind the poor quality of Saturn Doom and the so-so nature of the Hexen engine, do you feel any pressure to innovate a technology already way in advance of the competition? Do you believe that there is anything else you can coax out of the Saturn?
LOBOTOMY No not really. There isn't much pressure to do more with our technology than we are doing with Duke. I'm sure more can be coaxed out of the Saturn, but for us it will take progressively more time and effort to do so.

SSM Obviously, Duke Nukem is an eagerly awaited title and it can only be good news that Lobotomy are on the job. Is there anything extra you'd like to tell our readers about the state of your conversion that we haven't already covered?
LOBOTOMY There will be a lot of hype about this game, and it's all true! Seriously, in many ways this game will rival the PC version. We are concentrating on making Duke fun to play and exploiting the technology we have available to support that goal. If you like Exhumed, you'll love Duke on the Saturn. If you haven't checked out Exhumed yet, you should (shameless plug). Thus far, nobody has been disappointed.

SSM You're damn right there. Thanks.



Syndicate Wars

Imagine a world where personal freedom is non-existent, where an individual's life is controlled by some higher force and where violence is commonplace. But hey, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE isn't all bad you know! Why this issue we've pulled out all the stops to bring you the very latest Syndicate Wars coverage. MATT YEO writes...





There are certain factors governing the success of any video game. A developer requires imagination, originality and timing to transform a title from a negligible no-hoper into a worldwide winner. When that developer is Bullfrog, success is usually guaranteed. With a track record that includes such PC and Saturn titles as Magic Carpet, Theme Park and Populous, Bullfrog are in the unenviable position of having a had a string of continuous hits. That run of luck looks set to continue this Spring with the forthcoming release of Syndicate Wars.



This futuristic strategy/shoot 'em up has been available on PC for a few months now with Saturn owners anxiously awaiting any sign of a console conversion. The good news is that Bullfrog are currently putting the finishing graphical touches to the Saturn version which is now scheduled to be unveiled on June 16th.

For those of you unfamiliar with the high-tech, low moral world of the original game, Syndicate Wars is essentially a game of global domination, real-time strategy and explosive action. Set a hundred years after the original PC game, the sequel once again reveals a society of mindless citizens controlled by The Corporation, a faceless organisation that influences the planet's population with the aid of brain-implanted micro chips. However, complacency and corruption have resulted in The Corporation facing potential revolution at the hands of the religious fanatical group, The





MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

The PC version may have received its fair share of critical praise but the Saturn game will feature a number of additional features. Amongst a host of improvements, Syndicate Wars now features a fully rotatable 360 degree 3D world allowing characters to interact with and explore their surroundings. Original team leader, Mike Diskett, explained why this enhancement was introduced. "We've got the world in 3D now," continues Mike, "and the principle reason for this is that in the first one, one of the biggest complaints was it was an isometric view and if you walked behind a building, that was it, you couldn't see yourself. So now you can walk behind buildings and simply rotate the map so you can always keep yourself in view. We had to wait for a while for the technology to catch up so we could actually do that." Players are able to use the left and right shoulder buttons to smoothly rotate each level whilst the X









The Saturn game is designed so that players will be able to select the view they're most comfortable with. Good eh?

and Y buttons access the Zoom function allowing either a bird's eye view of a city or close-ups for precision work. The Saturn game is designed so that players will be able to select the view they're most comfortable with and, when necessary, they can choose an alternative angle with the minimum of fuss.

Critics of the original game complained that, although highly playable, Syndicate's visuals suffered from repetitiveness, resulting in some levels looking bland and empty. The superior graphical tools offered by the Saturn have enabled programmer ZZKJ (not his real name but a cool pseudonym) to create a stunning world of light and shade where street lamps bathe players in an eerie glow and flashing neon signs illuminate darkened alleyways. Full light sourcing is also evident. "The reason the first game looked a bit samey was because the cities were built out of a block set, there were only 256 different graphical blocks available. So there'd be three types of roof blocks, three window blocks and there was only a certain amount of variety we could build in. But in Syndicate Wars, the maps are polygon based, so each one can be completely different, there don't have to be any shared buildings at all. In actual fact we do have certain buildings because we want people to be familiar with types of building, they always need to be able to recognise a police station, a bank and so on. So we have a huge variety of buildings, then we've got the landscapes which can be completely different on each level, because you've got height fields, so you can have mountains or valleys. We've got rivers too, there are some levels that actually have boats on as well."

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

However, atmospheric visuals are just the icing on the Syndicate Wars cake, as the PC version proved with compulsive gameplay and the introduction of a multi-player network option. "It's quite different playing the network game," enthuses Mike, "it becomes a mixture of Quake and Command and Conquer, because you end up with the Quake aspect of just going out there to kill as many people as possible, but you also build bases up. This isn't something we've designed in, this is just how we ended up playing it. You create safe havens by laying razor wire traps around an area, and you've got laser bases you can put down which are like little gun turrets that shoot your enemies. So it turns into a game of protecting your base and attacking other people."

Whether the Saturn game will contain this feature, or even a Link Cable option is still a matter of conjecture. Sega's reluctance to release either peripheral in Europe has resulted in a number of companies removing these options from multi-player games >>



Take on the role of a dedicated agent of the Corporation and eliminate the Church of the New Epoch.



The Saturn version of Syndicate Wars features some stunning explosions.

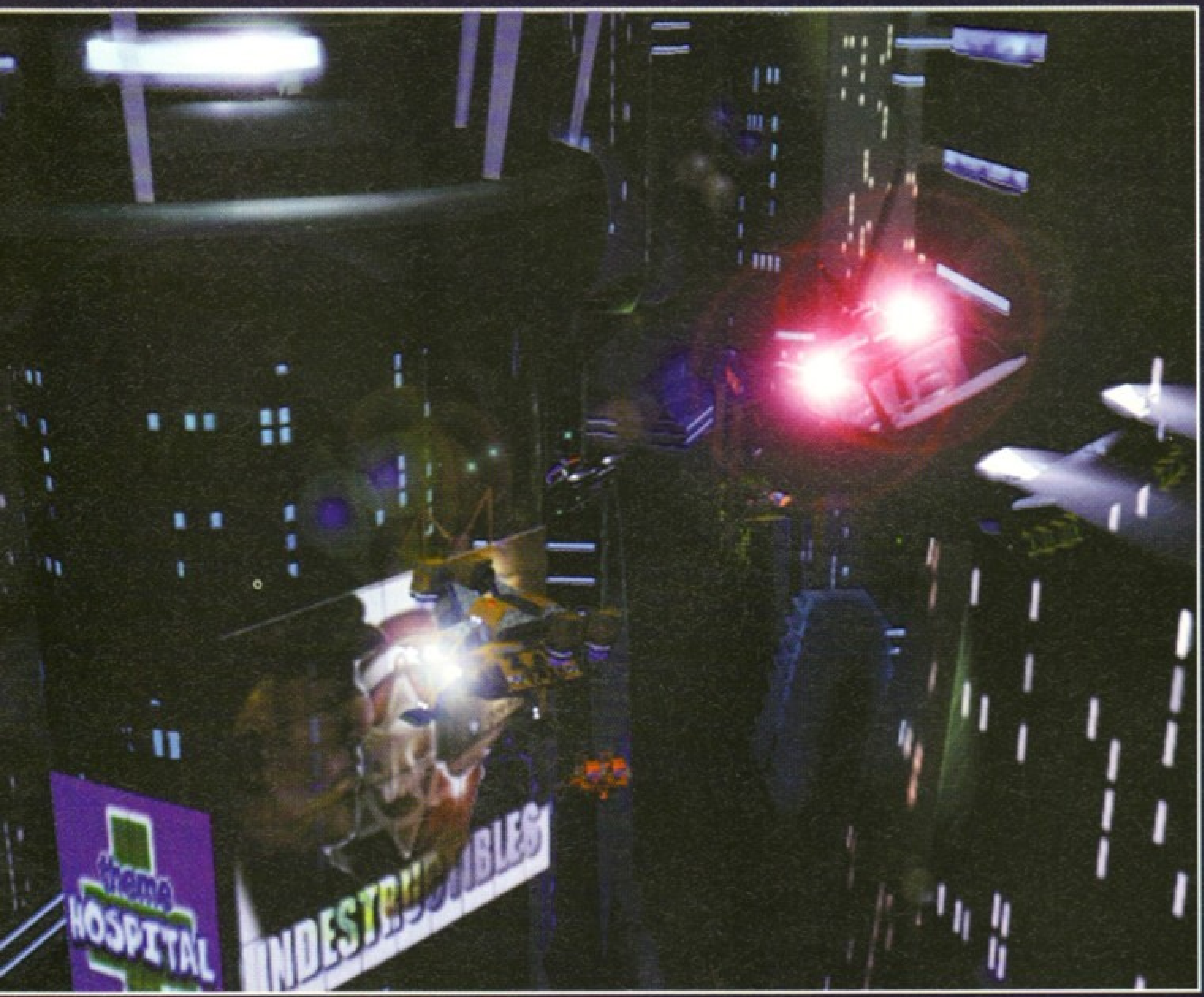


Set in a bleak, futuristic world Syndicate Wars allows players to shape society with the aid of cunning and heavy weapons.












Rendered cut scenes add to the game's dark tone.

thereby reducing the potential success of certain games (witness the one-player travesty that was GT Interactive's Doom). However, ZZKJ is confidant the Saturn is up to the job. "It shouldn't take much to support," he says, "because once you've got it handling a normal head-to-head link-up, it's not that difficult to do. It would obviously need a cartridge though."

FINANCIAL TIMES

Unlike some existing shoot 'em ups, such as Gremlin's Loaded, the strategy element in Syndicate Wars is crucial and adds an all-important element to what could, in the hands of a lesser company, be just another excuse for over-the-top weaponry and flashy explosions. That's not say that Syndicate Wars is lacking in the action department. No siree. To add some real depth Bullfrog have ensured that missions for both teams, comprised or four gun-toting individuals, range from standard assassinations and escort assignments to nighttime raids and daring rescue missions within enemy territory. To aid players in their tasks, both teams have access to a number of vital resources, all of which must be adequately managed in order to survive until the next life and death excursion. These include a Cryo storage facility (to store wounded team members), extra cybernetic enhancements, a R&D facility (essential for developing new technology) and access to a range of lethal weapons. Maintenance of of these resources costs money of course and players are frequently required to juggle funds and even raid the city bank in order to maintain their superior position. Whilst your operatives are hand-picked for their special abilities and mission-specific skills, even their mechanically augmented bodies and skills are often insufficient to stamp out the inventiveness of their opposite number.

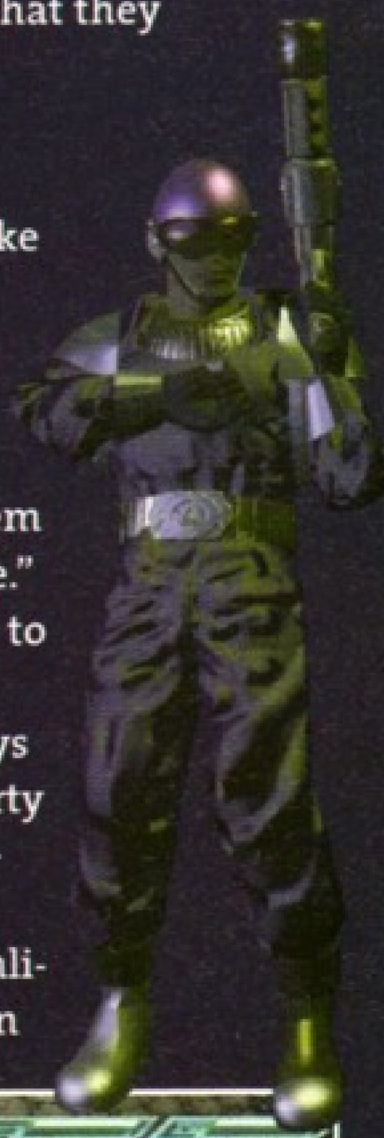
"The enemies now actually have tactics built in," says Mike. "If a whole load of agents were attacking you in the first one, they didn't know they were part of a group, they just individually attacked you. But now they're aware of each other and they'll try and form a plan together so often some of them will go one way round a building and some will go the other so that they flank you and take you by surprise."

Bullfrog have ensured that missions range from assassinations to daring rescue missions.

BOMB THE BASE

"I like the fact that you can destroy anything, like the whole world can be blown up." says ZZKJ, referring to the sheer mass destruction potential in Syndicate Wars. "There's a huge building, fine, there was a huge building, now it's big pile of rubble. Of course that can be a problem in missions where you have to capture someone." he adds, "Demolish a building and you're likely to flatten the hostage as well."

Players will find that their actions will always have a knock on effect in the game as both property and civilians will undoubtedly suffer in the ensuing power struggles. The local Police force are on the lookout for suspicious individuals carrying unlicensed weapons and will attempt to arrest or even



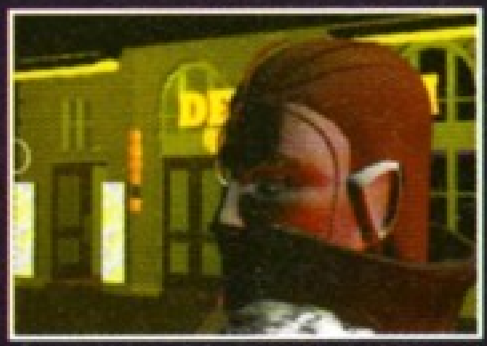




Players take on a series of missions ranging from assassinations to demolition jobs. Syndicate Wars could be the perfect blend of strategy and action.







Using the Saturn's unique hardware, Bullfrog have managed to produce detailed 3D worlds complete with light sourcing and shaded polygons. Pressing the L and R shoulder buttons, players can rotate each stage to select the optimum view.



terminate troublemakers. Innocent civilians on the other hand will usually be unaware of what's happening around them, due to the effects of the implanted chip, and will often wander aimlessly into fire fights only to be cut down in a hail of energy weapons. The cyber-punk and Blade Runner styles glimpsed in Syndicate Wars are evident with the dark, dismal city streets also borrowing a few chosen elements from a certain time travelling cyborg tale.

"Yeah, I was probably more inspired by the kind of Terminator idea which is that these agents are almost invincible, so civilians are meaningless to them." rants ZZKJ "They don't care whether civilians live or die. Also the Terminator films are completely filled with violent weaponry and gunfights and we want you to be in a fire fight and feel that sort of tense situation. Obviously having four invincible terminators wouldn't make for great gameplay so you're kind of equally matched in that you're going up against other cyborgs. Other members of the development team were influenced by different things, like one of artists is into Manga and so was influenced by all sorts of Japanese anime artwork. Towards the later levels there are a few Mechs in there. There's one that's like a giant crab and there's another one which is like a Gundam robot, he sort of hovers round the map, he's got lots of hover jets that allow him to move round."

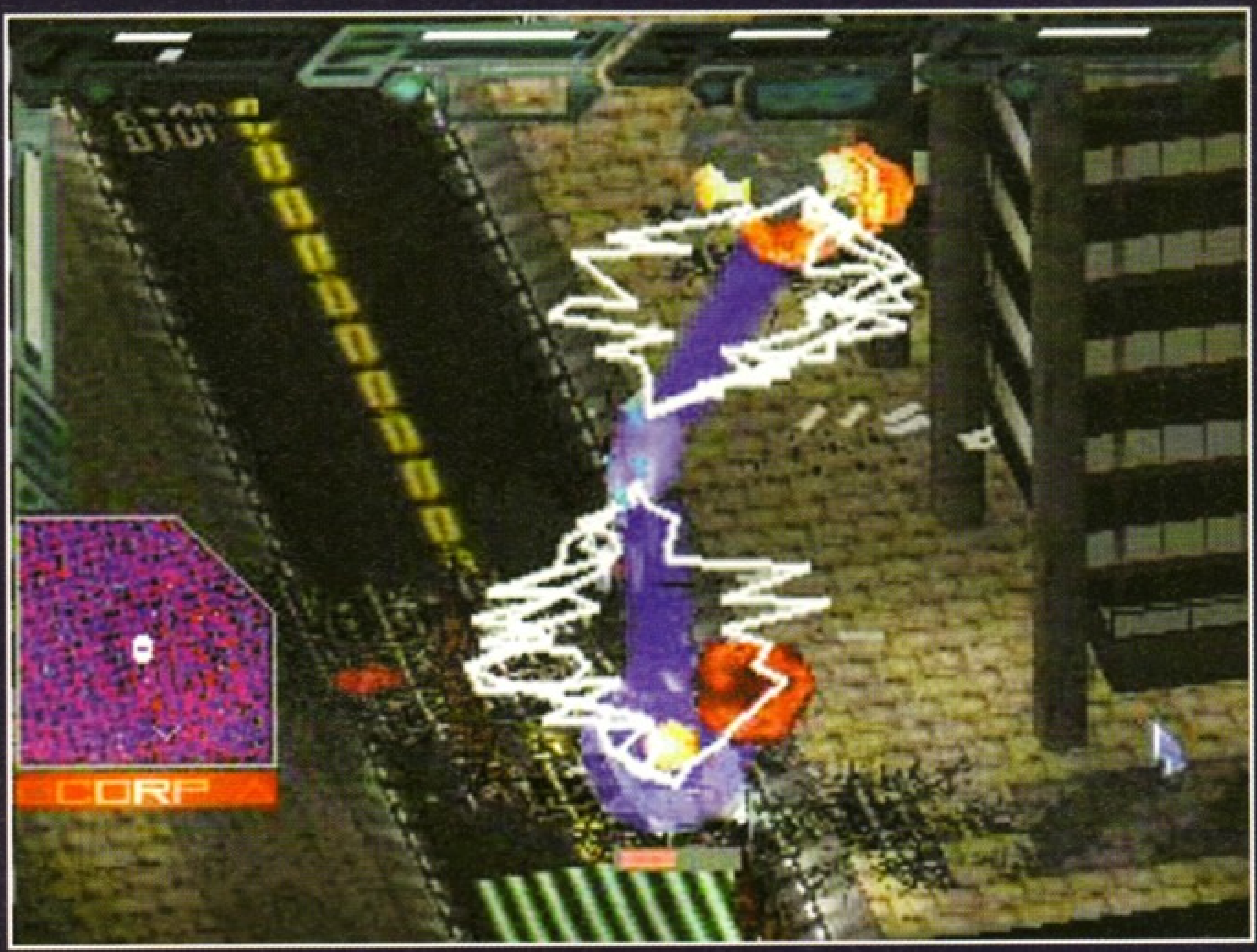
TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY?

As the first magazine to be granted an exclusive first play of the Saturn version of Syndicate Wars, we were impressed to see that the game's front end now boasts a stunning rendered sequence, perfectly setting the mood for the intense experience ahead, as well as some impressive rendered icons to enhance the game's various options. When quizzed on the capabilities of the Saturn ZZKJ was full of praise for Sega's machine.

"The Saturn is a general purpose games machine, while the







The game's front end now boasts a stunning rendered sequence, perfectly setting the mood for the intense experience ahead.

PlayStation is a true 3D games machine. This is a 3D game, so the first thing we had to do was to figure out what can be done in the 2D part of the Saturn. That then tells me what I need to fit in the available space, then we figure out what can actually fit in the available space and then the initial stages of the Saturn conversion is to basically get the engine up and running. This was difficult because the Saturn's only got 2 Megs of RAM and whereas Steve (the PSX converter) has an 8 Meg development system, I don't. So he was able to get the code up and running quickly, while I've had to pull bits out because I can't get the whole thing to fit yet. It can be done but the Saturn is pushed a bit, which is why I took the project on - I don't believe in doing easy projects."





Due to The Corporation's meddling, citizens have been reduced to mindless slaves, unaware of their surroundings or purpose in life.

THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

Now that the Saturn has proved its worth, Bullfrog are moving into the final development stages. Tightening the gameplay and tweaking the visuals will take a few more months but with an impending May deadline, time is of the essence. Whether Syndicate Wars will repeat the success of the original game is not in doubt. The Saturn looks set to receive yet another classic title, as Syndicate Wars seems to effortlessly bridge the gap between both strategy and action games. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will bring you the futuristic finished results in a few issues' time!







These rendered scenes are exclusive to the console versions. Expect smooth FMV footage and CG vehicles.

SKY TARGET

After a recent trip to Sega HQ to test their latest wares, one of the biggest surprises (of which there were plenty) was the first playable Saturn version of Sega's Model 2 coin-op Sky Target. Want to know more? Read on...

BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	3D SHOOTING
RELEASE	JUNE/JULY

HUGE BOSSES

Taking a leaf out of Panzer Dragoon's book, if such a thing existed, Sky Target has huge end-of-level bosses making your fighter plane look pretty puny in comparison. Destroying these is not an easy task and it's made worse by the fact that there's a time limit, adding a sense of urgency to your aerial antics. Seriously, these enormous great bosses really are worth looking out for in Sky Target.



No doubt many of you will be wondering what Sky Target is, not that it takes much working out. It's an into-the-screen aerial combat game in similar vein to the classic sprite scaler coin-op Afterburner and was first revealed at the JAMMA show in Japan at the back end of 1995 to a warm welcome. In keeping with Sega's tradition of converting their Model 2 coin-ops, a Saturn version seemed merely a formality. Or so we thought.

However, as has been the case with a few of Sega's coin-ops of late, notably Manx TT and also the Sega Ages games, the conversion work isn't actually being carried out by Sega themselves. It's being done instead by the team responsible for the Ecco the Dolphin games on the Megadrive. Only now, 18 months after the release of the arcade game are we beginning to see the fruits of their labour.

Sky Target has you piloting a state-of-the art fighter plane through enemy territory on a mission to destroy a stolen top secret prototype fighter. What this means in gameplay terms is blast the living day-lights out of anything that moves using your machine gun, homing missiles and Balkan bombs. It's that simple. There are various enemies for you to encounter which differ according to the level you are on. Though most of the time you'll be fending off hordes of enemy fighter planes, on some of the levels there's ground assault vehicles to destroy, enemy buildings and destroyer ships too. Destroying them is executed in a similar kind of way to Afterburner, using your lock on sight to target them before letting rip with a couple of missiles and blowing them out of the skies. There's also a Vulcan cannon too to use as back-up.



Like Afterburner, the main weapons at your disposal are homing missiles and cannons.

Once you've defeated the enemy fighter planes on each level, you then come face to face with the end of level boss which is usually a heavily armoured and well fortified plane of gigantic proportions. This part is made especially difficult by the small time limit you are allocated with which to destroy it.

As is the case with most games nowadays, you are given a choice of four different views from which to view the frantic action from. There's the full screen tip of the nose cone view, the fly by the seat of your pants cockpit view, the standard chase view and a slightly further back view. You also have a choice of four different fighter planes to pilot each of which differ in terms of manoeuvrability. There's the F-14 Tomcat featured in Afterburner and the Tom Cruise film of which it was a shameless cash in, the F-15, the F-16 stunt fighter plane and the French strategic fighter Rafale M. Quite why they didn't call it





Yet another top notch Sega arcade game hits the Saturn!
Sky Target is looking cool with super-smooth 3D update!



If you don't manage to blast the enemy 'planes with your missiles, try to take them out at close-range with your craft's on-board cannon.



Here's a good example of one of the gargantuan end-of-level bosses. Typically you need to missile the hell out of key points on the super structure before the time runs out.





Aim for the engines! Destroy! Ahahahahahaha!



3D graphics means lovely panoramic viewpoints.

Sega's classic Afterburner gets the Nineties treatment in Sky Target! Classic gameplay benefits from awesome 3D visuals!

the F-17 is beyond me. Although Sky Target expanded upon the original premise of Afterburner and utilised the awesome power of the Model 2 board, for some reason it was nowhere near as popular. This probably explains the large delay between the arcade release and the Saturn version and why Sega aren't doing the conversion themselves.



But what about the Saturn version? Well although at a very early stage in development with only a couple of levels playable it looks very promising indeed. Obviously the resolution is lower than the arcade original as is the frame rate. But it all appears to run very smoothly at the moment with no noticeable slowdown even when the screen is full of enemy bogies (I think that's the phrase). However the action was a bit sedated on the early version we played and not the in your face, adrenaline pumping action that we'd like. But like I said, it is still very early in development. Of the four fighter planes that were in the arcade game only one of them has been programmed in and handles quite well with the others being present on the select screen. Likewise only the chase view is available at the moment, but rest assured that the other three will make their way into the final version.

Sky Target appears to be on schedule for a summer release, with the main problem that the programmers are facing right now being how to make a rather shallow arcade experience into a lasting console game. Obviously this will arise through Saturn specific features, such as the Ranking Mode. The smart money however will be on extra planes, different weapons and maybe extra levels. Who knows? One thing's for sure is that we're going to be following how Sky Target progresses very closely over the coming months until its release.

MORE F-ING PLANES

Improving on the original Afterburner formula there are four different fighter planes for you to choose from. Each of them handle quite differently, though only one of them is playable at this early stage in development. There's the F-14 Tomcat, the F-15, the F-16 stunt fighter and the Rafale M.

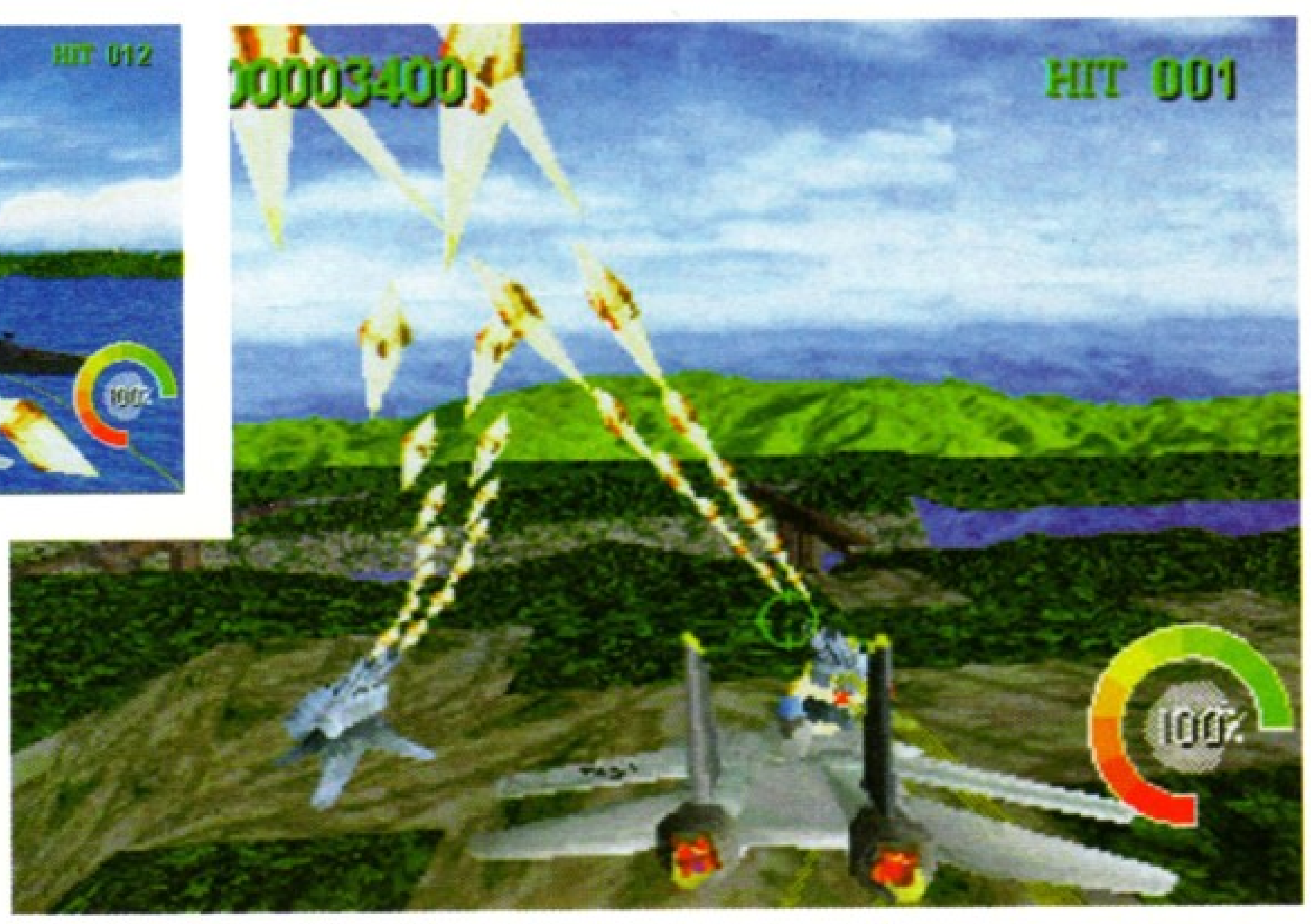




The ocean stage pits you against destroyers.



Ranking Mode is designed to boost lastability.



As you fly across the stages you can expect to see some ground-to-air cannons and missile silos. By the way, the light sourcing on your aircraft looks cool!

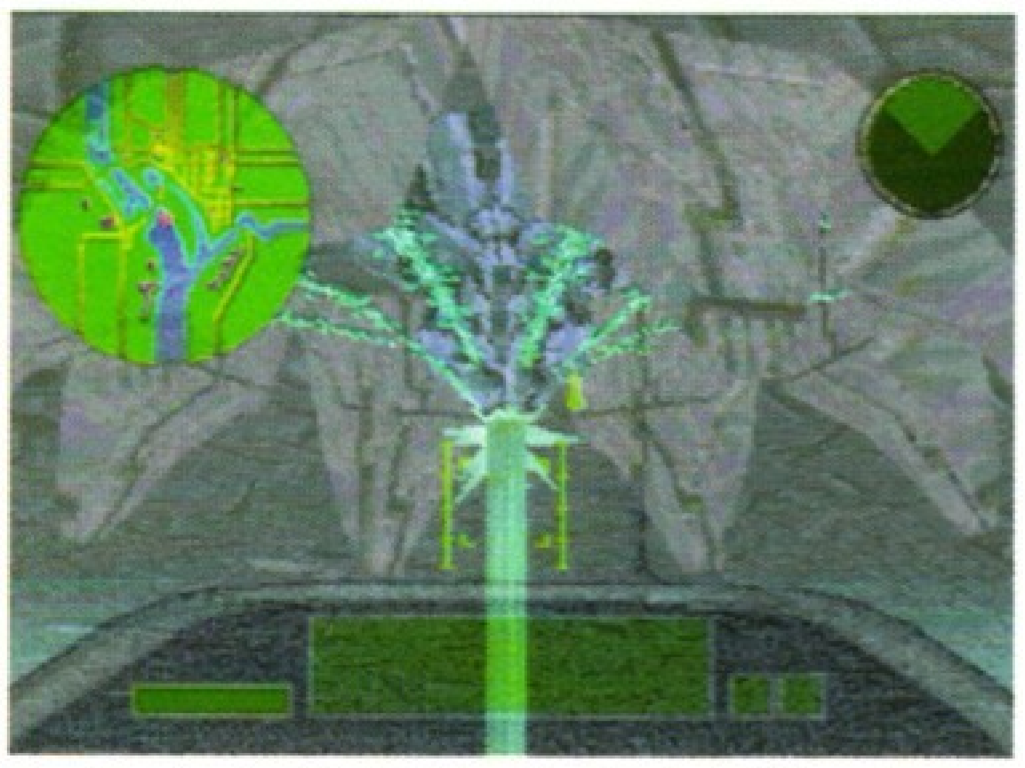


"Lock on baby! I'm getting a hard on!" Oz Browne flies again!

INDEPENDENCE DAY

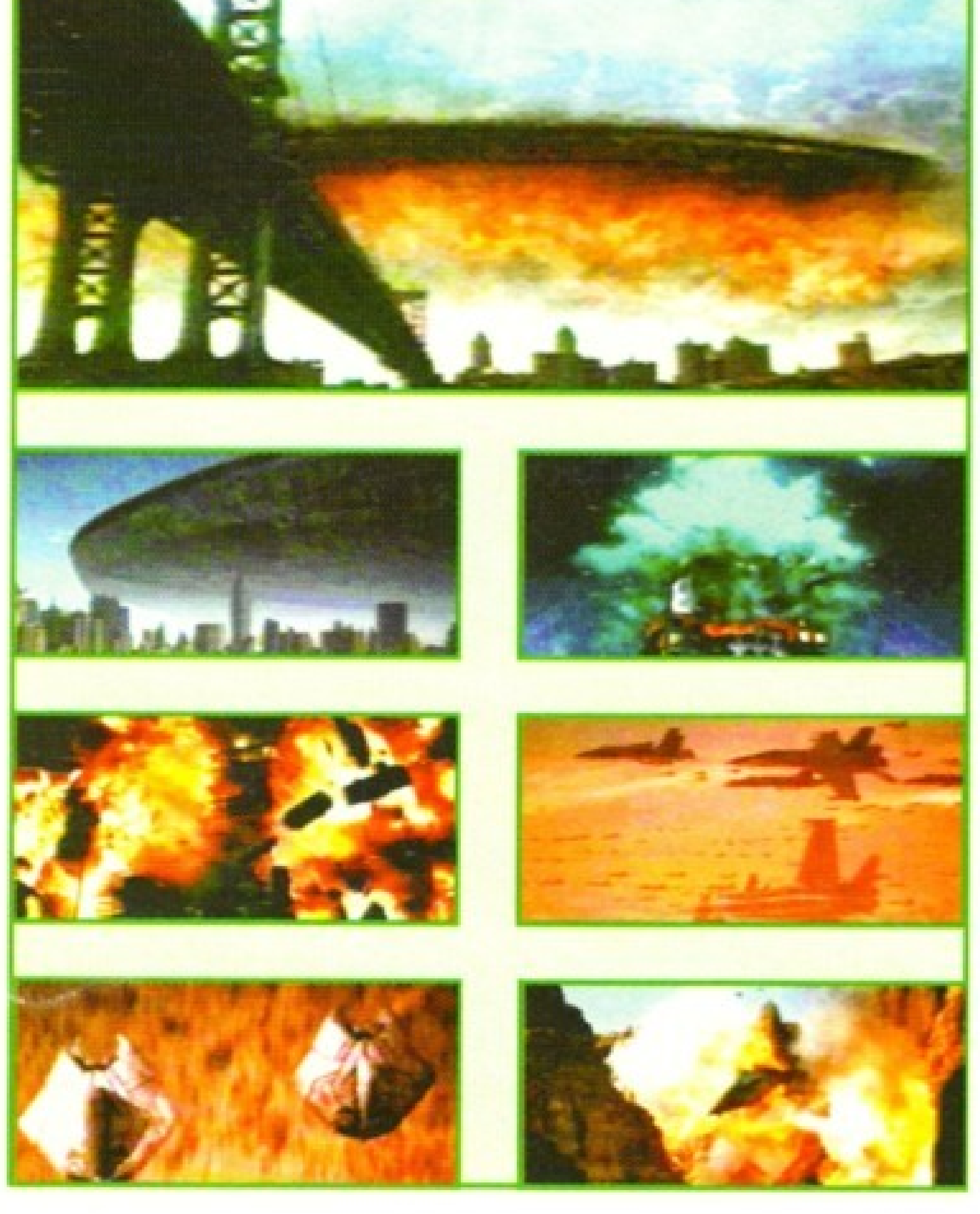
Be warned, aliens are about to invade Saturn! Yes, the question of whether or not we're alone in the universe may about to be answered. Fox Interactive and Electronic Arts prepare to unleash the game of the video of the movie of the decade...

BY	FOX INTERACTIVE
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE	MARCH


Despite a few graphical glitches, the visuals in Independence Day are usually a lot better than this.

CINEFANTASTIQUE

As Fox Interactive have access to the original source material the console versions of Independence Day will feature a healthy chunk of digitised movie footage. The intro itself seems to last forever and there are strategically placed clips between each stage. Of course the Saturn's video playback capabilities are hardly legendary but ID4's reduced window should result in some high quality FMV.



Undoubtedly the most commercially successful film of '96, Independence Day has been hailed by many as being bigger than Star Wars. Yeah, right. ID4's breathtaking special effects may have helped make it a must-see summer movie but one dimensional characters and a sieve-like plot are hardly likely to usurp George Lucas's epic space trilogy from its number one spot. Still, for sheer entertainment value, this everyday tale of 'Us vs Them' can't be beaten. Whether it's the nail-biting terror of watching extraterrestrial invaders turn our cities into rubble or the adrenalin-pumping excitement as we "whup ET's ass!" Independence Day would seem to have it all. As with any megabucks movie licence it was inevitable there would be a console game based on the film's more action-packed scenes. After the success of both Alien Trilogy and Die Hard Trilogy it should come as no surprise then to learn that Fox Interactive are busy putting the finishing touches to the Saturn version of Independence Day.

Scheduled for release on March 25, both the Saturn and PlayStation versions of ID4 were originally to arrive to coincide with the movie's home video launch. However, extra development time has been taken to insure that the finished product is worthy of such a high profile licence. With a film that has grossed over $680 million worldwide both Twentieth Century Fox and distributor Electronic Arts are obviously keen to maintain the quality of ID4 regardless of format.

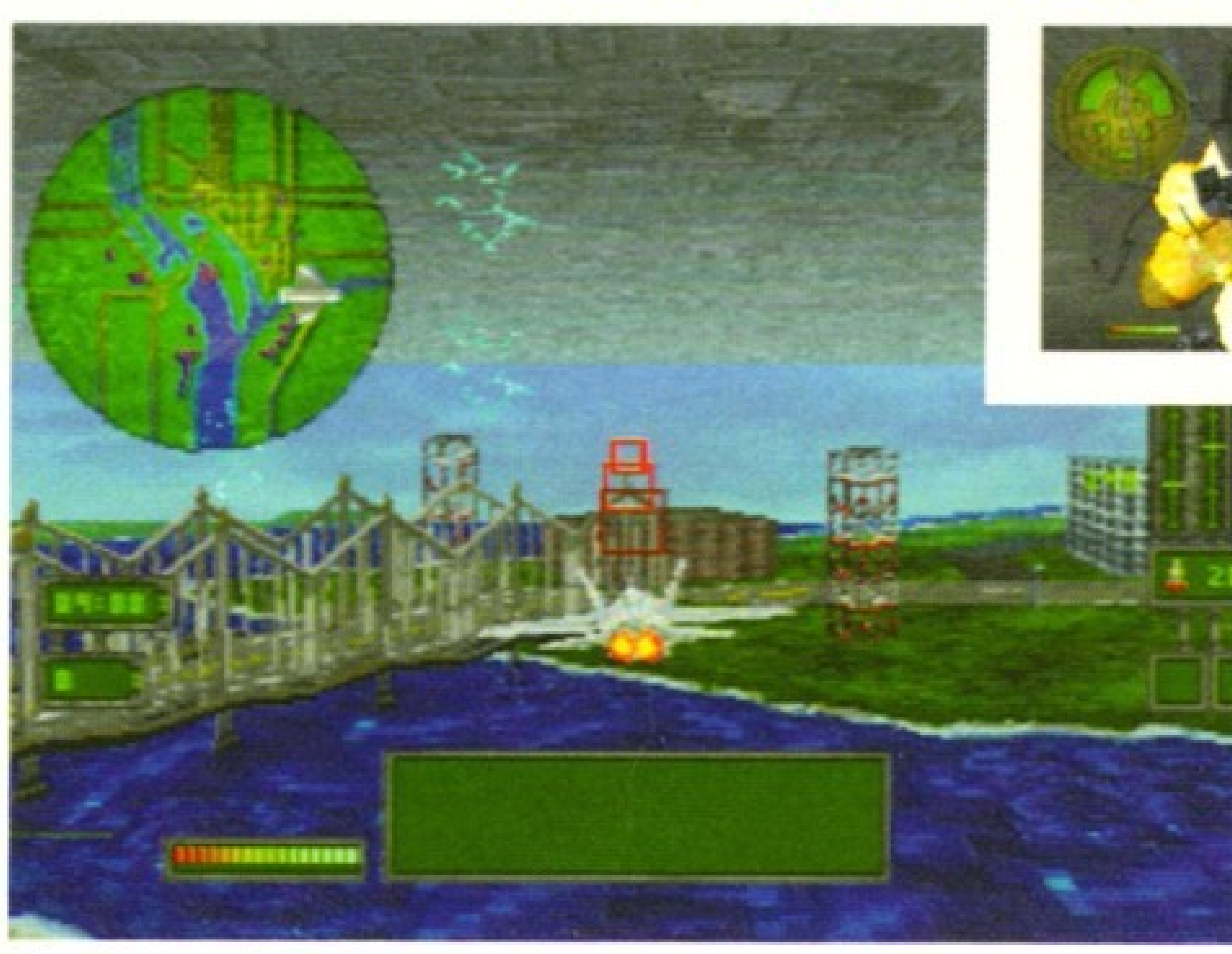


Although it's never revealed in the game, it would seem players take on the Will Smith role as a hotshot US Airforce pilot intent on stopping the alien invasion once and for all. Although the game contains

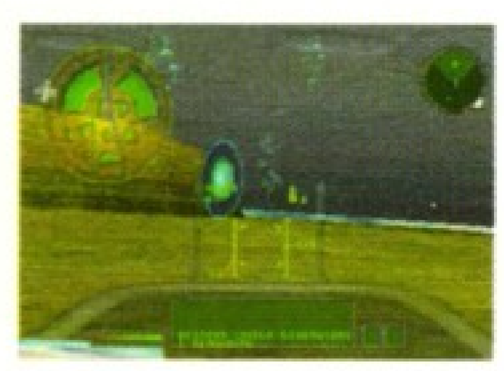


12 challenging levels, the basic scenario remains much the same as your mission involves flying a variety of aircraft (both man-made and extraterrestrial) into enemy held territory. Players are required to guide their craft over a scrolling 3D landscape using seat-of-the-pants flying to survive laser-blasting alien attackers and take out shield generators located on the hull of the mile wide mothership hovering overhead. These devices are usually well protected by armoured gun emplacements and as such may require multiple hits before the mothership is disabled. If players fail to take out the target within a set time limit, the alien craft releases a lethal energy beam, decimating the surrounding area and toasting the locals. Obstacles are provided by way of 3D scenery, such as buildings and rock formations, and players will often find themselves successfully dodging a pursuing foe only to smash into a well-placed canyon wall. Each craft is equipped with such state-of-the-art weaponry as chainguns and heat-seeking missiles although supplies are limited so keep an eye peeled for icons scat-

Cash-in alert! Independence Day lands on Sega Saturn! It's a pseudo-flight sim blaster with actual footage from the film!


Those blue sparks at the top are the shields around the main flying saucer. Take out those shield generator turrets.






Speaking of which, here is one of the aforementioned turrets. Blast! Kill! Etcetera!





Nearing the edge of the play-field here.



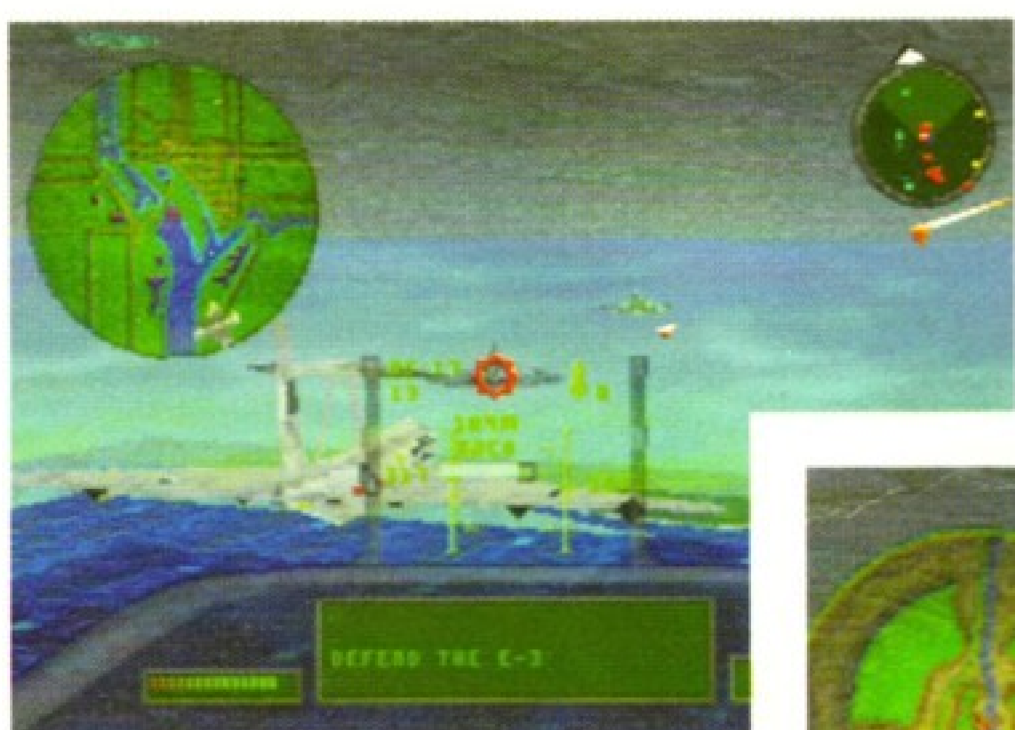


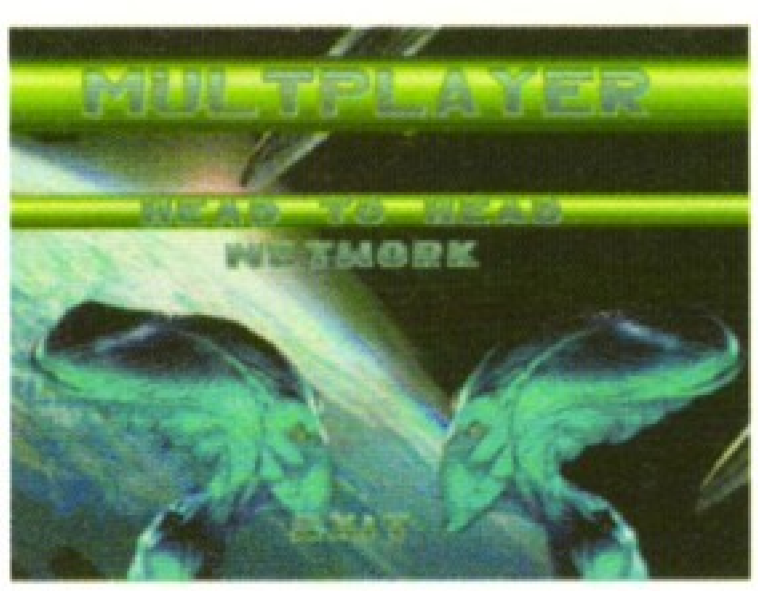
Based on scenes from the movie this game gives you the opportunity to fly plenty of aircraft including the crashed alien saucer!

tered throughout each level. Standard instrumentation includes a radar, altimeter and weapons menu whilst your fighter is also equipped with a missile lock detection system and personal force shield. Completion of later stages allows access to improved aircraft such as the shapely form of a high-tech stealth fighter and, ultimately, an alien scout craft. During missions players can select a variety of viewpoints including the obligatory in-cockpit option as well as external views from behind, from your wingman and even from missiles when launched.

In one player mode, ID4 may resemble a latter day Afterburner but the game's two-player head-to-head option adds a whole new element to what may appear to be a straightforward shoot-'em-up. Utilising a split-screen approach, players select one of ten aircraft and attempt to defeat each other in aerial dogfights with the loser facing an untimely demise at the hands of a superior pilot.

Although still unfinished at the time of this writing, ID4 seems to have enough action and multi-player mayhem to do the film's licence justice even if some liberties have been taken with the plot. Saturn owners can expect a full review next issue and if you're interested in winning a copy of Independence Day on video turn to the news section now as we've got five copies up for grabs!


Here you're on defense detail, which still involves plenty of alien blasting.



ID4 appears to work with the NetLink. There's head-to-head as well.



Unlike the alien pursuit ships in the movie, the flying saucers in the game have no shields, making 'em easy to take out.

DE PLANE BOSS, DE PLANE!

Initially players are only granted access to one standard aircraft, an F-16. Successful completion of each stage adds more vehicles to your roster. Complete the game and you can then tackle any stage whilst flying any craft. Each fighter has various capabilities such as the ability to carry a heavier payload or enhanced manoeuvrability.


The A-10 "TankBuster"


The stealthy F117 fighter.


The F-15 Strike Eagle.


The bog standard F16.


The durable F/A-18.


One of the best, the SU-27.


X-29: it's very speedy.


The YF-22 Rapier.


The so-so Eurofighter.


Oooh. It's a YF-23!

PREVIEW

CRYPT KILLER

Who says there's too much violence in videogames? Well it's certainly not Konami, as they're about to release their violent arcade shoot 'em up Crypt Killer.

BY	KONAMI
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOTING GAME
RELEASE	TBA



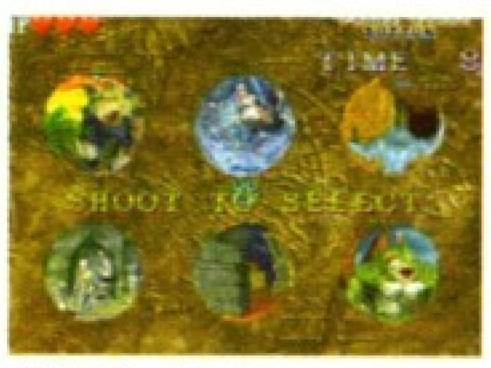


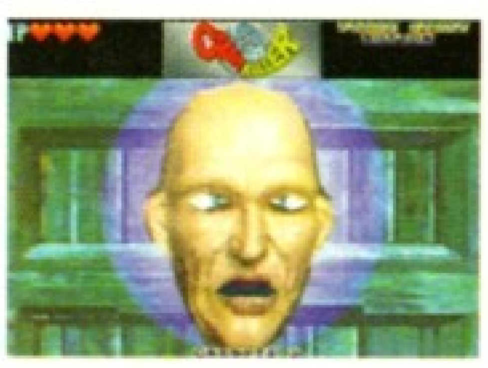
Unleashing a bomb clears the screen of all monsters.





Crypt Killer may be arcade perfect, but the arcade isn't perfect. Take a look at the shots and you'll see how pixilated it is.





(Left) The six different levels are accessible from the very beginning. (Right) Yul Bryner makes a surprise appearance.

TWO CAN PLAY THIS GAME

As in the coin-op, Crypt Killer has a simultaneous two-player mode which is good fun if you have two guns but it's a bit crap if one player is using a pad. The screen does get rather confusing at times though when there's two guns blasting away at once but it does make completing the game slightly easier. Recommended for one of those after closing time drunken videogames sessions.



It was almost a year that those who forked out for the Virtua Cop and gun package had to wait for any software support for the accessory. Although Cop was an excellent game with a lot of replay value, like most Saturn owners I yearned for a new shooting game with which I could use my pale blue pistol. Then out of nowhere, several of them came along at the same time, amongst them the amazing Virtua Cop 2. This seems set to continue this year with more gun totting games in the pipeline. However the problem with these games as in the arcades, is that with the exception of the Sega classics, most of them are crap. I wouldn't waste 50p on them in the arcade, never mind handing over forty quid for a Saturn version. Well Konami are hoping to reverse this trend with their latest release, a conversion of the arcade shoot 'em up Crypt Killer.

To be honest, most first-person perspective shoot 'em ups don't differ all that much and Crypt Killer is no exception. Sticking to the tried and tested gameplay of the many before it you simply blast everything that enters your field of vision. Shallow maybe, but fun nevertheless. To this effect you are fully armed with a handgun and six shells, which when depleted can be reloaded by shooting outside of the screen (where have we seen that before?). In addition you carry several bombs which when used have the effect of clearing the screen off all the enemies. Power-ups can be also found along the way too, which when collected equip you with a different weapon which you retain



When you are hit by one of the hideous creatures that inhabit each of the levels a red blob appears on the screen to let you know. If you get too many red blobs, you die.





These various caves look good don't they? Well, er, yes.





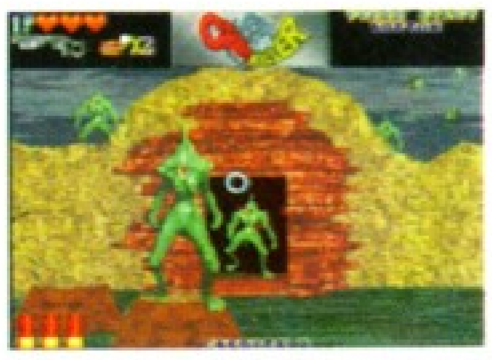
There is a wide variety of garish creatures for you to dispose of including blood sucking bats, scary skeletons and crabs.







It's amazing what kind of creatures Konami obviously think inhabit crypts, like this foul demon (above).



I'm sure I've seen these in an episode of Dr Who.





Blood and guts fly everywhere as you mercilessly slaughter a bunch of zombies. Your parents are going to love this game.



One blast from a shotgun and these hell fiends spill their guts.



I've no idea what the hell this creature is, so kill it anyway.



Danger lurks round every corner, like these particularly scary blue things that fire blue things at you.

Sticking to the tried and tested gameplay of the many before it you simply blast everything that enters your field of vision.

until you get gunned down like a stinking pig. Some power-ups contain extra lives too, which are essential for completing the game. However it's not gangsters you're fending off on this occasion, but hordes of garish mutants attempting to sap your soul of its will to live. Or something like that. There are shed loads of skeletons hurling ribs at you, a gargantuan amount of gargoyles, decomposing zombies, the seven-headed Hydra, the nuisance of the Nemesis and the snake ridden Medusa.

There are six dark and eerie worlds for you to wander around inhabited by the undead and with a large boss character at the end waiting to thwart your progress through to the next level. Each of these levels are selectable at the very beginning allowing you to complete them in any order you want. In similar fashion to VC2, Konami have sought to avoid the linear gameplay of most first-person shoot 'em ups by incorporating multiple routes into the gameplay. This means there are loads of different ways to complete the game adding to the games lastability somewhat,





though most of the time you progress through a predetermined route.

Whether Crypt Killer can repeat the success of the arcade version remains to be seen. Although arcade perfect in the graphics stakes, the sprite-based enemies look very pixilated and ugly up close. But possibly the biggest problem is that the main appeal of the arcade game was the pump action shotgun which was used to blast the enemies with. Somehow using the Virtua Gun just doesn't quite feel the same, though it's infinitely better than the standard pad. The two-player mode of the arcade has made its way in to the Saturn version which makes it slightly easier but at times confusing as you've little idea as to who has killed what.

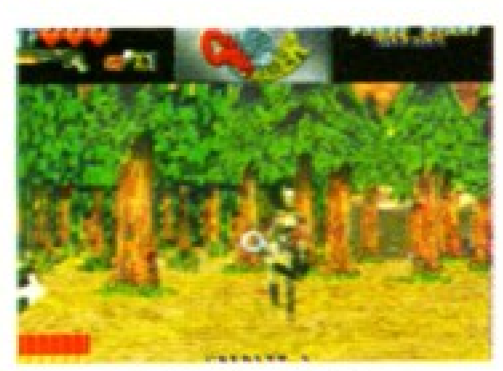
Over the past few months we've seen the likes of Chaos Control, Mighty Hits, Die Hard Trilogy and Area 51 all utilising the virtua gun. Whether Crypt Killer can compete is uncertain at the moment as it's not finished. Rest assured that such answers will be forthcoming in a future issue of SSM.

MULTIPLE ROUTES

In a similar way to Virtua Cop 2, Crypt Killer features multiple routes in an attempt to get away from the linear type of gameplay. This effectively doubles the size of the game and there's already six levels in there. To access your chosen route midway through the level, you must shoot away the chains that lock the entrance.







Another amphibian and skeleton in a soon-to-die situation.

PREVIEW

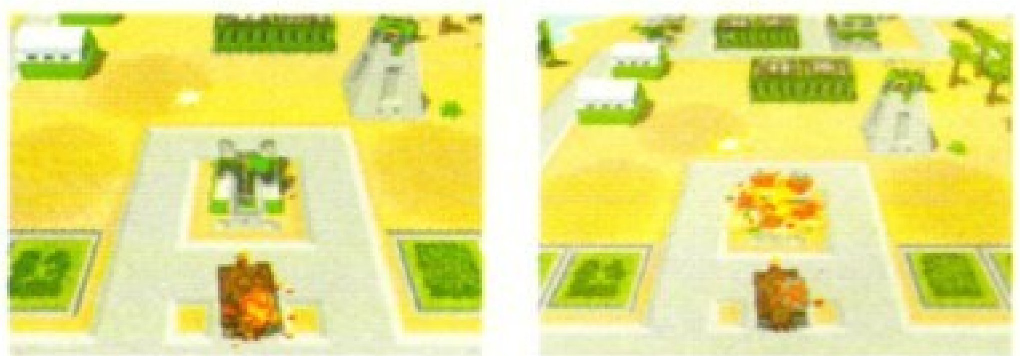
RETURN FIRE

Over the last few days we've been working up a sweat by having some furious tanking sessions in the SSM office with the unexpected arrival of this month's second tank related game Return Fire. Prepare yourself for battle.

BY	GT
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	TBA







Destroy the tower and retrieve the flag to win the game.







Return Fire is the sequel to the classic Amiga game Firepower and first appeared on the 3DO some time ago. In fact, if truth be known it was one of the few games actually worth purchasing on the ill-fated console. It was also released on the PlayStation last year to a warm response and now the inevitable Saturn conversion is near to completion.

The basic idea of Return Fire is simple enough. Infiltrate the enemy base and capture their flag causing as much death and destruction as you can along the way. Simple. Well er...no, not quite. You see each enemy base is heavily fortified with various gun turrets and enemy soldiers which makes busting through a difficult task indeed. Once in you have to locate the flag which is concealed in one of the enemy towers. Then finally you need to retrieve the flag and take it back to your underground bunker without being blown to pieces. Believe me, it's not as easy as it sounds.



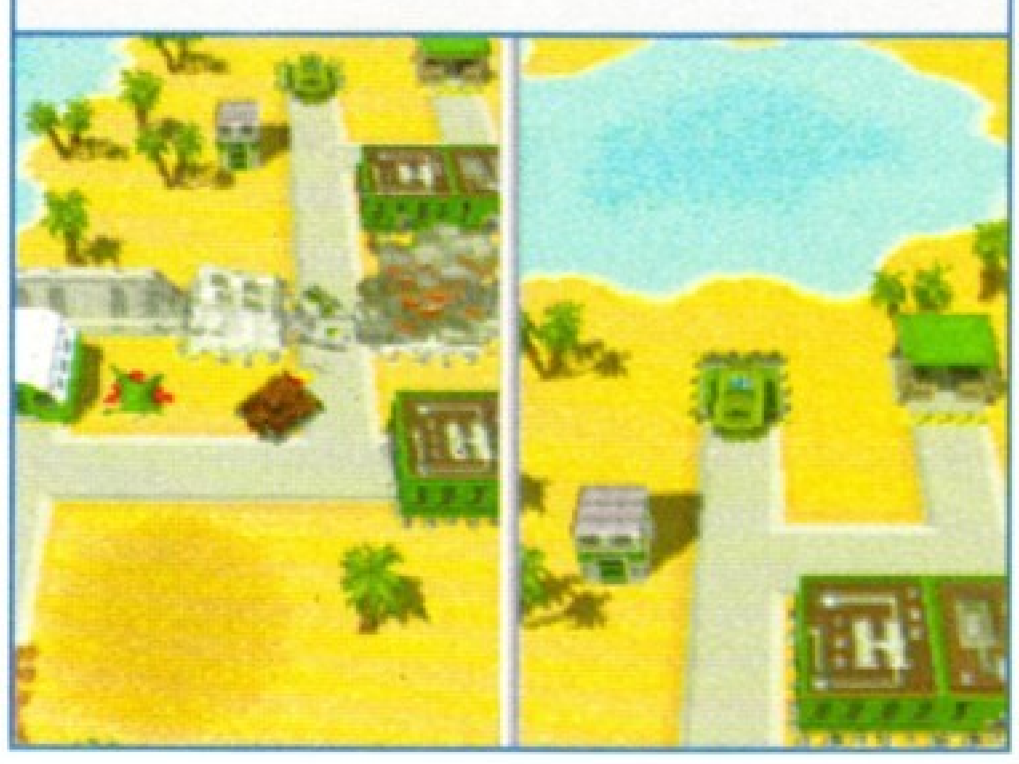
There are four vehicles at your disposal each of which are interchangeable during the course of the game. The key to success is selecting the right vehicle for the right task. So for example you could use the tank to blast through the enemy defences before changing to the jeep to retrieve the flag as it's the only vehicle that can carry it.

Possibly the best feature of Return Fire though is the superb two-player mode which retains the same flag capturing gameplay of the single-player mode. However you soon become preoccupied with attempting to thwart your opponent's efforts whilst racing to get his flag back to your base first. This gives way to all sorts of cheap tactics, such as hiding your own flag way out at sea so your opponent can't get it or laying mines all around your opponent's base. The music is also excellent. I never thought I'd ever find myself saying that classical music is cool, but in this instance it is. The various classical tunes add immensely to the tension and atmosphere and fit perfectly with the style of game.

As for the Saturn version, well obviously the transparency effects are missing but this makes no difference to the gameplay. However in the unfinished version we have the frame rate is quite sluggish especially in two-player mode and nowhere near the standards set by Mass Destruction. Hopefully this will change in time for the review next month, so we'll be keeping our fingers crossed until then.

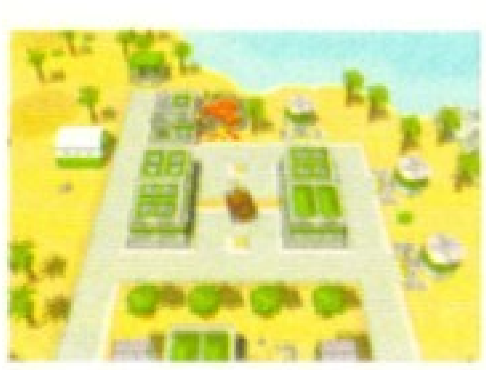
RACE TO THE FLAG

Return Fire is regarded by many, myself included as one of the greatest two-player games ever. It's sort of a race to find the opponents flag before he finds yours. This gives rise to some awesome head to head battles and cheesy tactics.



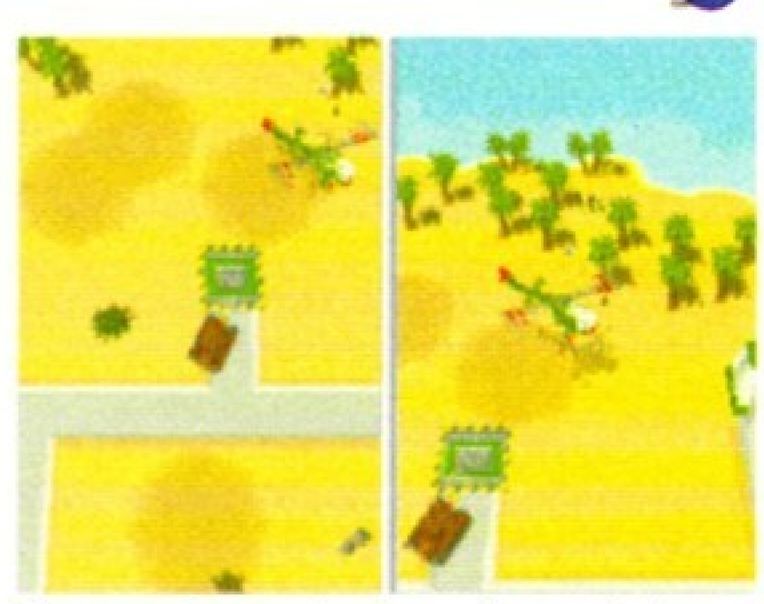


The enemy bases are very well protected indeed.





The vehicle select screen shows you your underground bunker and range of vehicles.



The two-player option is excellent and takes the form of a vertical split screen. Hoorah!



Virtua Writer™

Every month we like to change, or improve, something about SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. Since virtually the entire mag has changed since Rich took over, it's about time we turned our collective gaze to the Letters page (which hasn't). So here we have it with the all-new Virtua Writer page! Let's have some entertaining debate right here by sending in your missives to: VIRTUA WRITER, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London, E14 9TX. The most thought-provoking or entertaining missive gets a superb limited edition Virtua Fighter 3 book not available in Europe!

ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

DEAR SSM

I've just read the letters concerning stores such as HMV, Comet and Game etc. persuading people to buy PlayStations instead of Saturns. I also experienced this in my local HMV in Bromley. When I went in to buy a Saturn, VF2 and Sega Rally (only because you get a free pad) I asked the assistant a few questions about the Saturn. He then started going on about how Tekken was better than VF2 and Ridge Racer was better than Sega Rally. I promptly laughed and left the store. As I was walking down the high street I decided to go into Electronics Boutique and asked the same questions to the assistant as I did at HMV. One of them had a PlayStation and said the main reason he got it was because of better graphics and major game releases a few weeks earlier. The other assistant who owned a Saturn told me how fantastic Sega Rally and VF2 were (and let me try) and told me about future releases such as WipEout, Loaded (which I own and love) and Euro '96. I decided to purchase my Saturn with VF2 and Rally with which they gave me a free copy of SSM and MMS which I still buy now. So overall I recommend EB as the store to buy Saturns and games from as they are unbiased, correct and helpful.

Themis Bakas, Nunhead

This may be so in your case Themis, but I could show a sack full of letters to the contrary. Like this one... LEE

DEAR SSM

I'm an avid Saturn fan and think your magazine is the best in the world. I have two points to make. Firstly I'm fed up with people slagging off the Saturn. I bought my Saturn in November because I couldn't wait till Christmas, so I went shopping to buy a Saturn game. When I went into Electronics Boutique I couldn't believe my eyes. There was two little shelves in the corner which had Saturn games and the rest of the shop was PC and PlayStation games. The Saturn games they had were old ones which came out with the Saturn in 1995. To top it off the blokes at the counter were telling people that the Saturn had no good games and so they should get the PlayStation. So they're saying that Nights, VF2, Fighters MegaMix, Manx TT, Soviet Strike, Daytona CCE and Sonic 3D are crap! I don't think so.
My second point is I think you should bring out more demo discs so people can play the Saturn's great games.

Paul Jolly, Coulsdon

And so the controversy rages on, at some length. To address your first point Paul, the thing that really scares me is that these people are allowed to vote. God help us come May time. Maybe you should get together with Themis and have a fight about it. As for your second point, we're working on it at this very moment. LEE

RICH IS FIT SHOCKER

DEAR SSM

I've got a couple of things I want to get off my tits, okay? In Dixons the other day I was looking at the Saturn games with my friend Roxanne when I saw a couple looking around at computers. Anyway a women assistant came up to them and said "can I help you?" They said they were looking for a console and you'll never guess what they recommended, the Saturn, yes I couldn't believe it. She said that the Saturn had the most varied and strong line up and listed Virtua Fighter 3, X-Men vs Street Fighter, Sonic Fighters and Quake.

One thing that gets me though is them stupid gibbons who fancy women game characters. Look boys, calm down, they're only fictitious characters. I mean, I think Harn from Guardian Heroes is a hunk but he's not real so I don't go writing into Sega mags telling them that I do. Oh and Daytona CCE wasn't that bad. Oh and print my letter this time.

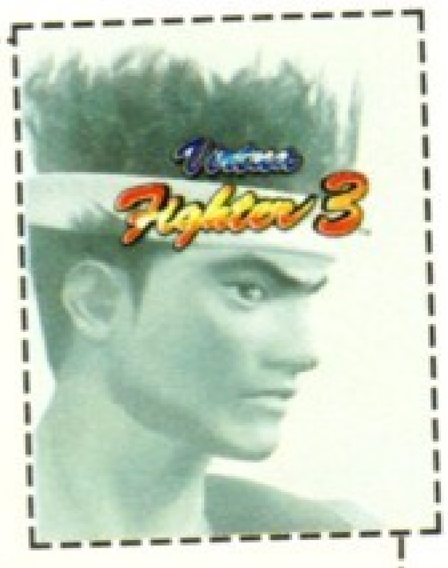
Laura Baites, Chesterfield

PS I think Rich is FIT! (Although I haven't seen his body, so if he could appear naked perhaps?)

What a preposterous idea to have Rich butt naked in our highly respected magazine. He would never under any circumstances lower his standards to such demeaning and degrading levels, not for any amount of money. But I've got some Polaroids if you want them. LEE

Ah I see... and just what exactly do you use them for, Lee? RICH

BOOK WINNER
SONIC DOOM!



DEAR SSM

After reading two letters in issue #14 and #16 my brain started ticking over with ideas for a new game. After many hours of non-stop thinking it suddenly hit me, why create new characters and plot when the best ones are staring us in the face. Here is my game. It's called "Sonic Doom". It takes everyone's favourite blue hedgehog and puts him in Mobius hell with a shotgun. Like Doom you can blow your enemies away in a pile of blood only this time the bad guys are cute little bunnies, squirrels and pigeons with machine guns. You can blow their heads off and watch their cute little guts spew out all over the floor.

On the other levels you have to leg it after Dr Robotnick down a corridor and shoot him up his fat ass with a BFG 9000. Wouldn't it be great if after all this time Sonic gets to participate in some mindless violence. You could even throw in a few plums.

Mark Beswick, Rugby

I grow weary of the endless references to plums that plague our letters page. LEE



OH GOD, NOT DIGITISER AGAIN

DEAR SSM

I was flicking through the Teletext pages the other day and found a computer games section (Digitiser). After reading a few pages I made a shocking discovery. Stuart Campbell (one of the writers) referred to the wonderful black box that is the Saturn as "Horrible Sega's diabolical Saturn". He also said that Worldwide Soccer '97 was "ludicrously over-rated".

However he did not just say that, oh no. He then started talking about PlayStation games. "The zoomy F1", "the brutal Tekken 2", "the blasty Die Hard Trilogy". Don't get me wrong, these are all pretty good games and I have played them loads. But how about "the dreamy NiGHTS", or "the ultimate Fighters MegaMix", eh? He said nothing about these games and they're ten times better than anything the PS could do.

Anyway, I have vowed never to read Digitiser again, ha ha! Oh, by the way, can anyone out there get a cheat to work on Guardian Heroes?

Laurie Harriott, Brighton

And so the Digitiser backlash begins. The letters have been piling in on this topic, some suggesting Digitiser should be renamed to "The Unofficial PlayStation Magazine". Just bear in mind the old anecdote, "you get what you pay for". LEE

As Clint Eastwood said in the lamentable Dead Pool movie, "opinions are like assholes. Everyone's got one". But the distinction between opinion and informed opinion is made clear by Mr Campbell's various comments. RICH

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3 ON PLAYSTATION?!? YEAH, RIGHT

DEAR SSM

I was really looking forward to this year what with games like Virtua Fighter 3, Fighters MegaMix, Die Hard Arcade, Manx TT, Marvel Super Heroes and X-Men vs Street Fighter. I really thought that this year the Saturn would be king of the consoles and at last get the respect that it truly deserves. But I've just read something which is a bit disturbing. I first saw it on Digitiser but then we all know what they're like so I didn't pay much notice until a few days later when I saw it in a magazine. It said that the PlayStation now out sold the Saturn in Japan and since Japan was the only place where the Saturn ruled it now meant that it was in serious trouble. It said that because Sega had lost millions and millions of dollars in Japan due to the Saturn that this year would be the last for the Saturn.

It said that instead of releasing a new console it would just make games for the other consoles like the Nintendo 64 and the PlayStation. In fact it said that you shouldn't be surprised if a Virtua Fighter game came out on the PlayStation later this year. It even said that it could be VF3 because the PlayStation could handle a first rate conversion without paying out for a 3D cartridge like you'd have to for the Saturn.

So come on and tell the truth. What the hell is going on? Is this year Sega's swan song or is the above just a pack of lies spread by Sega's scared competitors. We must know.

Peter Wright, Dover



Will the lovely Aoi from VF3 grace PlayStation? Nope.

It wasn't by any chance a PlayStation magazine you read this in was it? Not having the sales figures at hand I couldn't say which console is selling more in Japan. But if it is the PlayStation it wouldn't surprise me because they've had some big games out recently which inevitably sells more machines. But when Sega's next big wave of arcade games come out it will doubtlessly swing back in the Saturn's favour. That's the nature of the industry. The suggestion that the PlayStation could handle VF3 is ludicrous. Compared to VF2, VF3 has even more complex 3D backgrounds and fighters and millions of polygons it would be an impossibility. Not that Sega would even try. LEE

With the hi-res, multiple playfields and such and such, VF2 on Saturn would be impossible to replicate on PlayStation. So, as for VF3 appearing on PlayStation... well whoever wrote that is clearly betraying a severe lack of journalistic competence. RICH

RIDDLED WITH DAMN PLAYSTATIONS

DEAR SSM

I am writing to you about your response to Virtual On. I have played it and think it's rubbish. The best part about it is the graphics. It moves too quickly and you can't see what you're doing. Why the hell did it get a 93% rating. I just needed to get that off my chest. I would like to add why the hell don't Sega pull their fingers out and get some adverts going. I say this because the area which I live in is riddled with damn PlayStations and they will not listen to me about the Saturn. They think Ridge Racer Revolution is better than Sega Rally. Aren't they stupid?

Jonathon Marshall, Birmingham



Virtual On... denounced as rubbish by people who aren't able to understand it. Fools.

Virtual On can initially appear as being a very shallow game. It's only when you realise that using the boost button in conjunction with your various weapons producing many different effects, which in turn leads to many new strategies. Which I thought I'd explained earlier. The game is awesome and moves into stratospheric territories of excellence when you play it in two-player mode. Hence me marking it up to 94% the following issue. RICH

Virtual On deserved every percent of its score as I think most Saturn owners will testify. I suggest you go back and play it some more and don't bother us again. And yes they are very stupid indeed. LEE

BRIEFLY...

Dear SSM,

I think you should have more demos. As well as your fantastic mag I also buy CVG and they also said it encourages people to buy more games. I bought the Jan issue with Flash 3 and I have really considered buying Tomb Raider after playing the demo...

Phillip O'Reilly

We will produce a cover-mounted demo CD whenever we can get hold of a quality disc. It's that simple. Better we stick to our awesome quality than produce one game demos of old titles. RICH

Dear SSM,

In Sega Power they hint you have reviewed PlayStation versions of games claiming they are Saturn versions. I adore your mag and think you better set the record straight. In my opinion, Sega Power are spreading Bullcrap.

Ian of Stourbridge, West Midlands.

At risk of turning this into a veritable bun-fight of a debate, I think this is referring to a review of Olympic Games which never came out on Saturn but was reviewed in SSM before I took over as editor. Eidos Interactive have explained Sega Power's error to them - we *did* review the Saturn version (although one or two multiplayer aspects were missing) but Eidos just didn't release it, hence the misunderstanding. It's as simple as that. We would *never* review PS code - that would be about as honest as printing PS shots of Resident Evil scanned from a Jap mag and saying they're Saturn ones. D'oh! RICH

Dear SSM

So the PlayStation's better placed to convert arcade games is it? Convert which arcade games exactly? The only ones PlayStation gets are Namco pretenders. Come on, everyone knows that Sega innovate and Namco copy. Example: Time Crisis - Namco's gun game soon to be converted to PlayStation. Bit late isn't it? Us Saturn owners already have two of the best gun games ever... One last question: do the Fighting Vipers stand a chance in Fighters MegaMix against the Virtua Fighters with all their new moves?

William Curley, Surrey.

Namco occasionally innovate (see Alpine Racer), but generally your statement holds. As for the Vipers - in VF mode they get caned. In FV mode, their power makes up for a lack of technique. But if any Viper thinks he can take down Akira, he's got another thing coming. RICH

Dear SSM,

You asked what we thought of Daytona CCE. Basically Lee Rowland (issue #16) is talking out of his bottom. [He then takes Lee on point by point and says Daytona CCE is good - Rich]. Overall, put it on HARD, keep put of the Daytona car (it's miles too easy), play Arcade and prepare for a race and a half to the finish line - 90%, now where have I seen that before? Don't worry boys, you were right.

T J Bennett, Bedfordshire

In many ways, Daytona CCE was disappointing, but compared to the majority of Saturn games, it's clearly of a good quality. But Manx TT firmly puts Sega back on track, if you will excuse the pun. RICH

Q&A

The monthly excursion into Q+A territory has come around once again, so it's time for the greatest criminal mind on the planet (with assists from Sega's Mark Maslowicz) to use the smallest portion of his vast, inventive genius to look at your letters and answer some of them. Oh by the way, please don't start your letters with "I've written ten times and you've never printed a letter". The reason your letters haven't been printed is because they are boring and if you can't get it right in ten attempts, it's just not worth the bother! Write to Q+A, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, London E14 9TX.

A TEENAGE GIRL WRITES...

Dear Q+A

Hello greatest Saturn mag on the face of the Earth! I have a lot of questions about games because I'm a newly recruited female Saturn fan. It's the boys who know most about the gaming world, so please answer these. MMS and CVG are too damn stubborn to print a teenage girl's queries, so I'm writing to you instead to see if you are just as bad as them!

1. What is that FMV you keep saying? What's it stand for?
2. Has Yu Suzuki said anything about the VF3 chip?
3. If I get VF2 will the Kids edition be worth getting? Why? Does it have extras or something?
4. Will the B-Univ CDs be on sale in the shops? Please say yes! Please oh please oh please!
5. Because I haven't got Sega's address I'll have to ask you guys this. Why didn't Sega make Streets of Rage 3D instead of Die Hard Arcade? Will there be a future release? After selling my Megadrive I miss playing Blaze.
6. Will there be a Tomb Raider 2?
7. Why don't you let readers send you some artwork you could print. After all you are the dominant Sega mag. Let's tease the PlayStation with some art?
8. Why do you sound so bored when replying to Q+A? Get a mascot!
9. Is it true that the Saturn can play audio CDs? And what would happen if I put a Saturn CD into an audio CD player?

Rhoda Villegas, Catford.

Never let it be said that SSM lets down the teenage girls in our beloved collective readership! 1. FMV stands for full-motion video. Basically it's the movie style bits as opposed to the gameplay bits. 2. Nope. 3. It's cuter with some extras, but basic VF2 is the better game. 4. I'm afraid not. 5. There may well be a Saturn Streets of Rage game before too long (but then again there might not be). 6. Yes and it should be out late October. 7. Hey I'm not stopping any one. 8. I'm not bored at all. In fact, I find this task so exciting I think I'm going to have to shoot myself! 9. Just put the CD in and it will play it. As for playing Saturn CDs on your hi-fi, you'll just hear the CD tunes.

DESTRUCTION DERBY FETISHIST

Dear SSM,

This is the fourth letter I have written to your mag and you've not printed any. So please print this one.

1. I bought Destruction Derby about a week ago and when I look at the PS version the buildings don't pop up, there's fog on the City Heat stage and it's full-screen. Why is this different on the Saturn version?
2. In your review you only mentioned five tracks, but when you move up a division the tracks change. Don't you think this adds more lastability so the overall mark should go up?
3. Is DD2 coming out on the Saturn in the near future because DD is ace!
4. Are any of the Namco games like Ridge Racer or Tekken coming out?
5. I was in WH Smith and saw an advert for Need for Speed in one of the mags and it said that it was coming out on PlayStation only. Is it coming out on Saturn?
6. When is the link-up cable coming out because it would be great to use it on DD or Doom. Is it worth getting from Japan and will it work?

Ashley Nurse, Nottingham.

1. It's down to effort or lack of it on behalf of the programmers. 2. Hmmm... that still doesn't excuse the poor quality of the game itself. 3. DD2 is a possibility. 4. No, it's not likely. Anyway, Sega have games to better Namco in nearly every genre. 5. Where have you been, man! It's been out for months. 6. DD doesn't use it any way, but no it's not worth getting until more games use it.

ZZZZZZZ

Dear SSM,

1. Which game should I buy next? Tomb Raider, Fighting Vipers or should I wait until a decent new game comes out?
2. When are Fighters MegaMix and VF3 coming out and which will be the better of the two games?
3. Are there going to be any sequels to Tomb Raider, Sega Rally and SWWS 97? If so, when are they coming out?
4. Which is the best racing game for the Saturn?
5. Is WipEout 2097 coming out for the Saturn and if it is, is it worth buying?

Chris Proffitt, Stoke on Trent.



Virtua Fighter 3 and Manx TT SuperBike are two eagerly awaited Sega Saturn releases. Oh yes.

1. Get Tomb Raider. It is ace. 2. MegaMix out in May and VF3 end of the year. VF3 will probably be better by virtue of it being a later release from programmers who've learned still more coding techniques. 3. Tomb Raider yes, Rally undecided, SWWS yes. 4. Sega Rally Championship, although Manx TT is looking ace! 5. Yes it will, but no news as to when just yet.

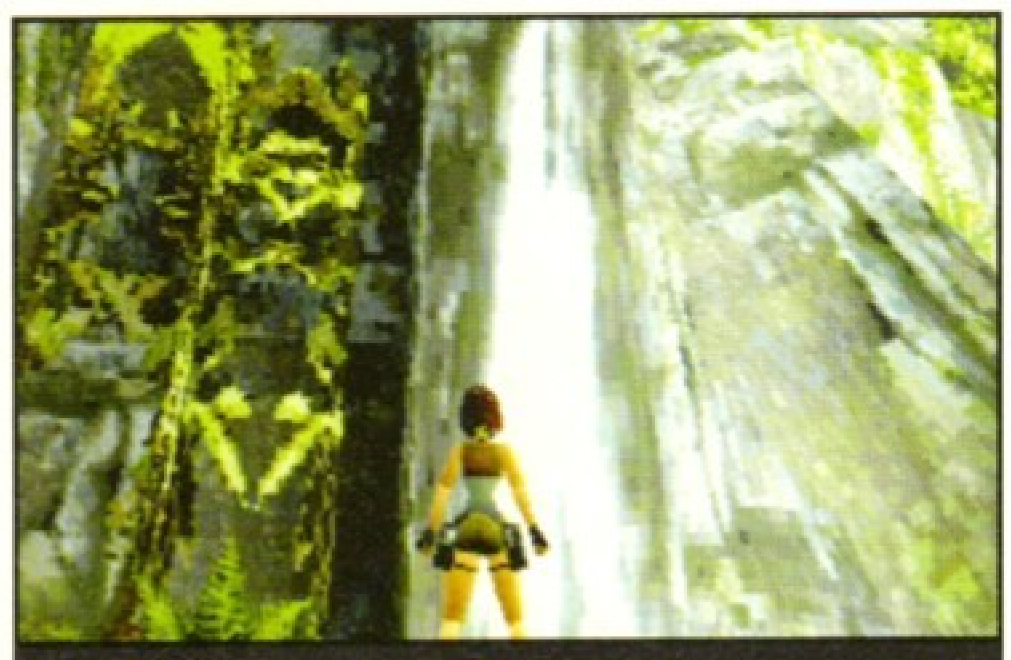
NOTHING HAS BEEN PRINTED

Dear SSM,

I have written into magazines before and nothing has been printed. I would be so happy if you print this letter that I will go out and buy Doom! Well, I wouldn't go that far...

1. I am thinking of getting Tomb Raider for my birthday. Has it got the option to go into Lara's house in it?
2. I have seen Exhumed for £25 in Dixons. Is it worth getting if I own Alien Trilogy?
3. Do you like my games collection? I have Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter 2, Alien Trilogy, Daytona USA and Victory Goal.
4. Should I get Fighters MegaMix bearing in mind I already have VF2?
5. What is the point making Doom link-up? The link-up cable won't even be out in Europe?

James Nicholls, Swindon.



Here's "Womb Raider" to use Dave Kelsall's hilarious gag.

1. Get Tomb Raider. Lara's house is indeed in it but that shouldn't really affect your purchasing decision. 2. Exhumed for £25 is a bargain - Alien Trilogy doesn't compare. 3. What kind of question is this!?! If you must know, I think you should get rid of Alien Trilogy and Victory Goal and get NiGHTS and SWWS 97 immediately. 4. If you like fighting games, yes. 5. If more games come out that use the link-up cable, I daresay it will appear.

NIGHTS IS FRGGIN' AMAZING!

Dear SSM, I have just bought NiGHTS and you lot were right, it's friggin' amazing! However, I have a few queries and as you think you're the "masters" see if you can answer them.

1. I have heard from mates at school who say there is a debug mode for NiGHTS. Is this true and if so what is it?
2. Also, in the game there is something to do with A-Life. I have looked in the manual and it says bugger all about it. Tell me before I go and hang myself or drown myself in dogs' piss.

Lee Something, Bournemouth.

1. It might work on foreign versions of the game, but there's no debug mode for the UK version. It was in pre-production versions of the game. 2. A-Life concerns all the little sprites that occupy the levels. They mutate and evolve the more you play it, and you can play a pivotal role in that evolution.

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Take it to the

The Easter selling season is almost upon us, with putting all of their eggs in just the one basket, it would appear. So, no Fighters MegaMix until May, then. Instead racing fiends get to accelerate to full throttle with the brilliant Manx TT SuperBike. RICH LEADBETTER dons his riding leathers...



The Saturn has proved that it is most impressive indeed when it comes to the racing game genre. What's more, it has done this with just two games - Daytona USA and the frankly astounding (even now) Sega Rally Championship. In fact, the latter title remains the benchmark by which all racing games are judged.

In the arcades, the AM3 team behind the Rally game followed it up with Manx TT SuperBike, a motorbike racing number based on one of the most famous biking challenges in the world: the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy. Although not a huge hit in the same league as Rally, the AM3 team put their all into this game. In addition to quality software. a cabinet-mounted bike was used to control the game... which obviously won't make it into the Saturn version!

However, now that the game is complete you can see that beneath the flashy cabinet lies a fearsomely addictive racing game in a similar league to Rally!

Manx TT SuperBike is reviewed on page 60.

Manx!


Castrol
1
DREAM MACHINE
Racepaint
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SHOWCASE



You get a white-out style effect as you emerge from the Laxey tunnel.



A pretty steep corner awaits as you clear the tunnel. A good lean here is essential.



With the corner clear, you have another opportunity to build up speed.



You reach your optimum velocity on this downhill stretch of the track.



Passing through the idyllic Isle of Man countryside, the downhill stretch continues and your engine is close to red-lining.



You cross one of the few zebra crossings retained in the conversion at this point!



Those red signs mean danger – this is the steepest corner on the Laxey course.



Straight after this arduous turn you race through the checkpoint.



The course gets more torturous by the moment, but speed can be retained here.



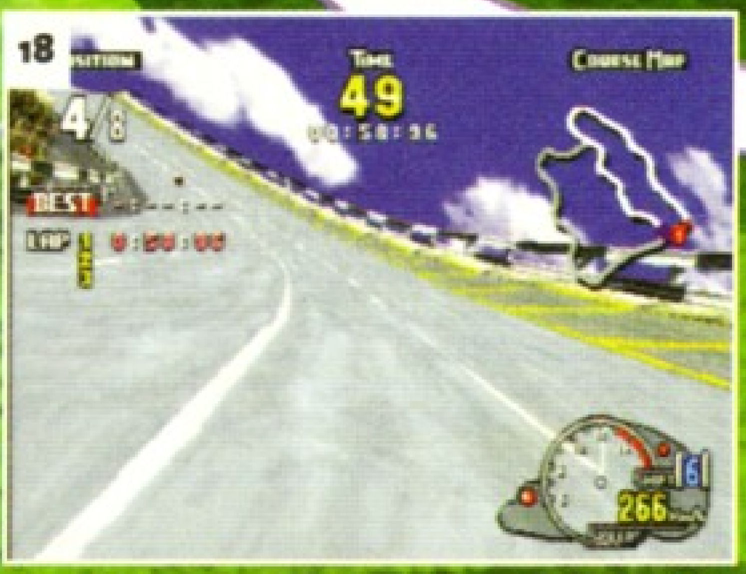
Your speeds are helped by another downhill section at this point.



A sudden right hander isn't too long, so with care you can speed through.



Here we are about to take on the final, very long, left-hand turn.



The slanting nature of this turn, coupled with the width, makes it pretty easy to take.

LAXEY COAST

In the arcade version of Manx TT SuperBike, the Laxey Course was definitely for beginners, the aim being to get you into the game's unique control method. The road is wide and corners are not too difficult to take. The idea here was to get you comfortable with the way the bike works and give you some idea of how best to take corners with the enormous leanable bike. With the Saturn version, this remains the course for beginners, although since control is achieved with the joypad, this race is now more of an exercise in balls-out maximum velocities and perfecting your racing line.



The first corner is simple to negotiate, leading into an S-bend.



The key here is to stay as straight as possible, on the best racing line.



Hopping over a small jump, you build up plenty of speed for the upcoming tunnel.



You can build up plenty of speed on the first straight and the first corner is easy.



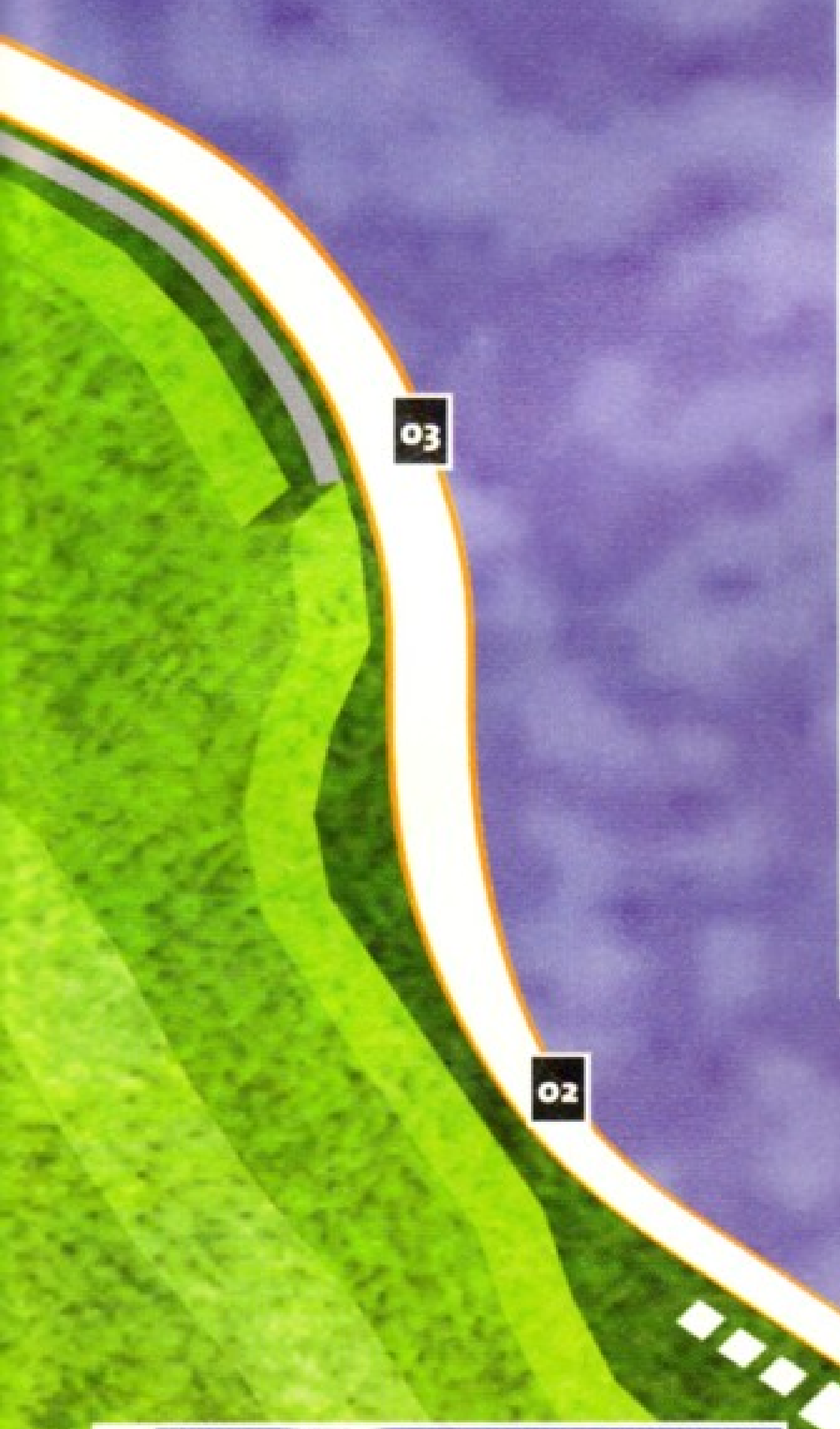
You start at the back of the grid – as usual – some way behind the starting line.



The corner over, it's full throttle time as you speed towards the finish.



The slight gradient of the hill slows you slightly, but keep the throttle at maximum!



HERE COMES THE MIRROR MAN

What is mirror mode? Where does it come from and what does it want? Basically, it was invented by Sega of Japan's CS Team under the command of one Ruichi Hattori (who went on to do Rally and Daytona CCE) when Megadrive Virtua Racing was created. Mirror mode was a bonus for those who had completed the basic game and was designed to boost lastability - all left turns became right ones and so one. Namco decided on a different method when instilling some replay value into the lastability-sapped PlayStation Ridge Racer... you drove the car the wrong way around the circuit!

With Manx TT, the programmers have incorporated both aspects into one Big Idea. The turns have been flipped AND you go around the course the wrong way! Additionally, the course has been tweaked so the warning arrows on the corner point the right way, so it looks kind of like a whole new course.

With the Laxey Coast, you also get the somewhat bizarre benefit of enjoying an all-new sunset background (so you get no sudden flash of light coming out of the tunnel now), but otherwise it's business as usual. The corners remain untaxing and this is maximum warp bike racing at its best.

One thing to note is that if you're finding this course easy, so are the CPU opposition, who take the corners on the exact racing line and seem to have better top speeds at these areas too. The only way to succeed and clinch first place is to get the best advantage from the straights and do your best on the corners. Manual gears help.





For the Laxey Coast, Reverse Mirror mode offers much the same experience, as the course has few troublesome corners.



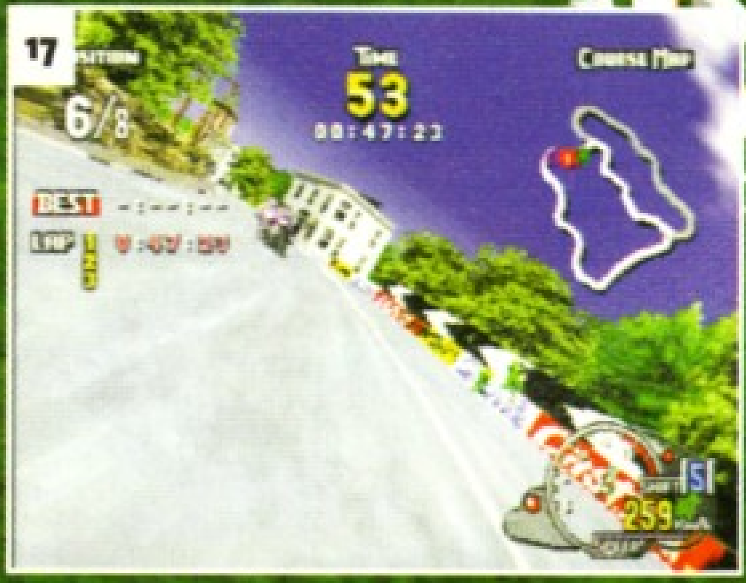
The "hard" part of the beginner course returns...



... Although this is a pretty sharp corner, it's nothing compared to the S-bend later on!



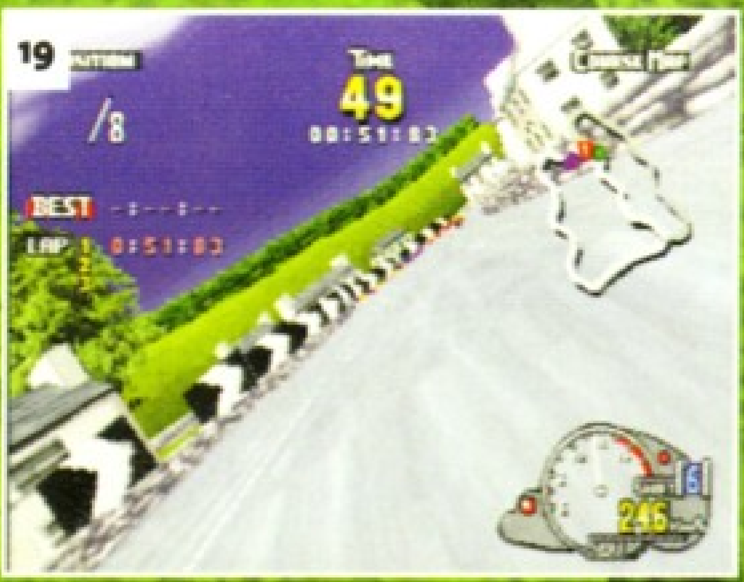
"Passing the checkpoint!" We're still in the Laxey part of the TT course – no problem.



The action lets up a bit here, and on these straights you can catch up on your CPU foes.



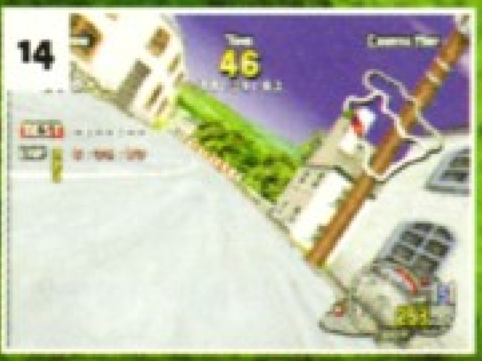
You shouldn't have any problems at all here.



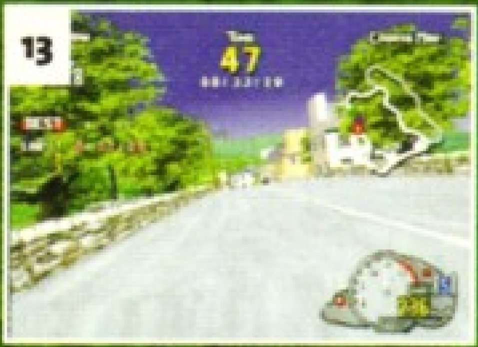
This part of the course is shared with the beginners' Laxey track.



Make the most of the wide roads here and pass as many CPU bikes as possible!



The corners are short, so you can take them at speed.



Entering the town at maximum warp!



This extremely sharp turn is pretty easy if you stay on the right side of the road.



After all of that aggravation, things get a bit simpler for a short while.



This area of the TT course can make or break your lap time. Although it's not too difficult by the look of it, actually taking all of the consecutive corners without smashing into the sides is pretty tough.



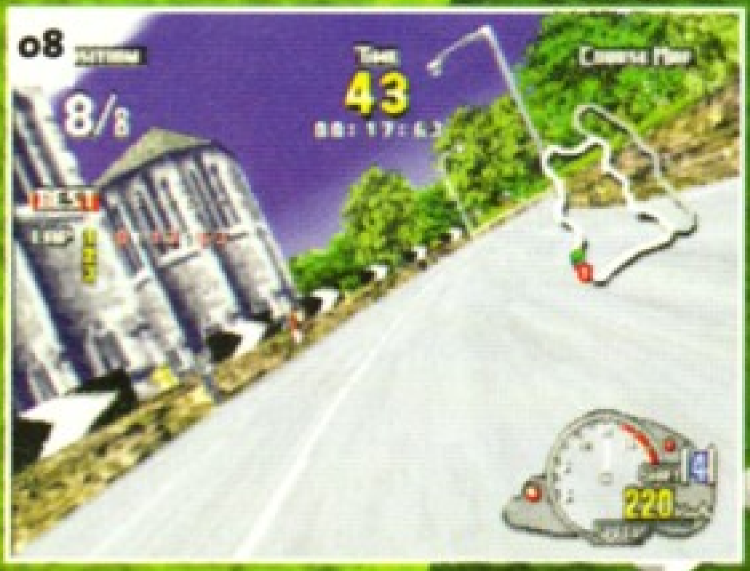
The road narrows on yet another twisty turn.



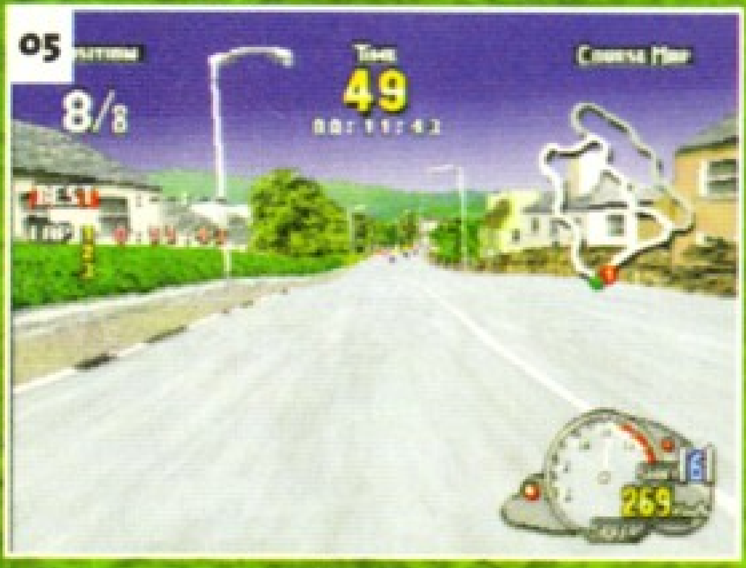
Another turn that looks easy, but needs a very controlled lean on your bike.



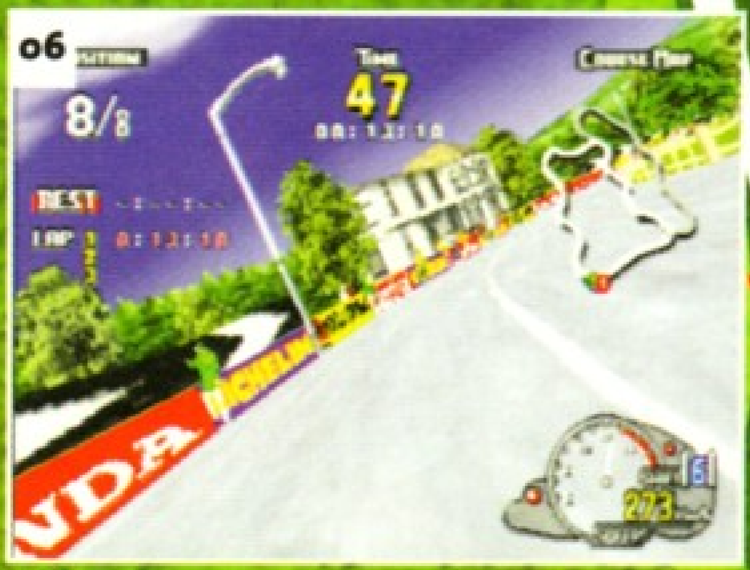
You lose control in the air when you take the bridge.



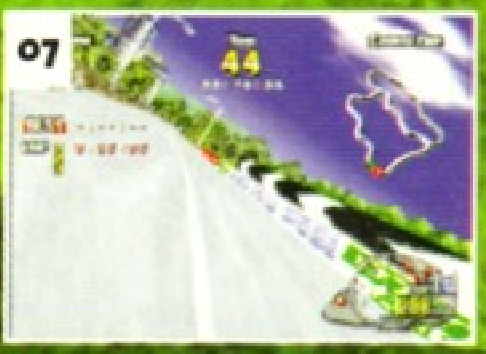
Taking this turn without hitting the sides requires some effort. Lean in gently...



You can regain your speed on this long stretch without any hassles.



A series of turns starts here but they're pretty mild compared to what's ahead.



Another not-so-difficult corner right here.

TT COURSE

Here we are in the actual race proper. Although AM3 did a marvellous job of recreating the Isle of Man course for TT purposes, it is a considerably truncated version of the original track. Which isn't surprising when you see that the real thing is over 37 miles, taking in a good round loop of the Isle of Man! Still, all the major landmarks appear to be present and correct in the Saturn version, bar the bizarre omission of several zebra crossings...



This is probably the fastest part of the course in the unreverse-mirrored TT track.



This area sees you finally waving goodbye to the easy Laxey part of the course. We're soon back in TT land, where things get extremely tough indeed.



Coming upon the horrible s-bend. Prepare for the worst!



The key is to brake, turn and accelerate using powerdrift...



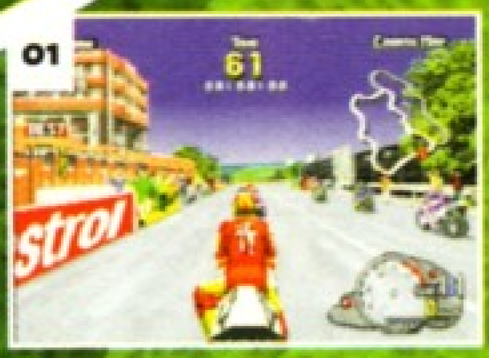
... This should leave you in the centre of the track!



The twisty S-bend is the nemesis of all riders on the TT course.



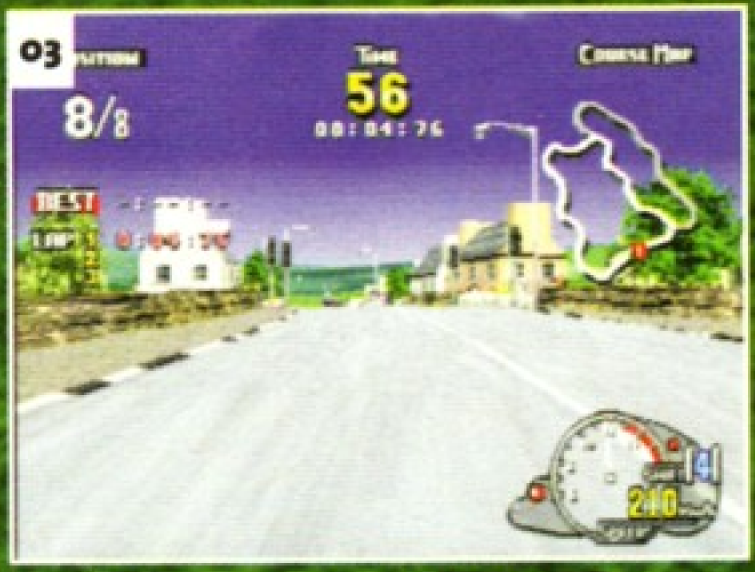
Once clear of the S-turn, it's full speed ahead to the finish line!



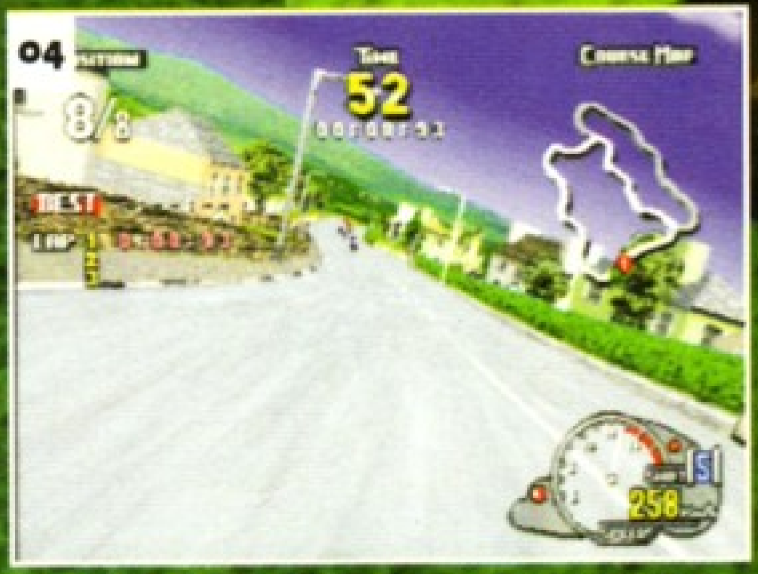
The men are sorted out from the boys on the TT race!



You won't have any problems with this long straight.



Full throttle as you speed along the opening streets of the TT course.



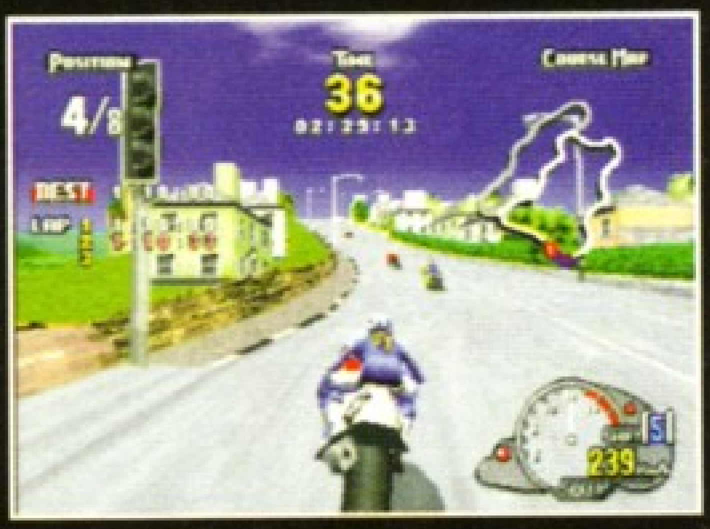
The downhill stretch increases speed still further - you need to slow down for that turn.

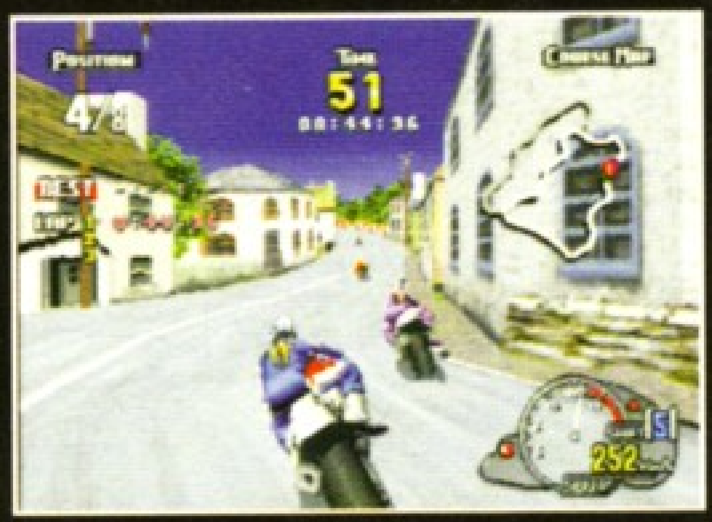
ISLE OF MAN COURSE REFLECTIONS

One of the most bizarre aspects of Manx TT SuperBike is also one of the most baffling areas of Sega Rally Championship. That is, no matter how hard you try, you just can't crash. There's more chance of a sudden universal apocalypse than there is of your biker coming off his steed (even more weird when you consider how readily your opposition are sent flying). In the TT course, this two-fingered salute to the laws of physics can be used to your advantage. Smack into a corner and you get a slight speed decrease along with a pleasing ricochet effect - this can often be used to your advantage, particularly on the final treacherous s-bend just before the finish line.

Of course, it's better to get the racing line, drop gears and use the brake in order to powerslide - that's the way to success, particularly in the SuperBike league.

The TT course is a large, excellent example of good design, combining some taxing bends and corners with some brilliant straights. The velocities achieved on this course easily eclipse the Warp 9 experience of the Laxey Course, particularly on the downhill section. It's also here that you realise that the flouting of the laws of physics rear their ugly head again - although you go faster, the CPU opposition don't.- Perhaps they're scared. Continuing this effrontery, they make up for it on the uphill bits, just when you're struggling to keep your speed up. The Reverse Mirror TT Course provides even higher top speeds - but that pesky s-bend occurs at the beginning of the track now!





The Reverse Mirror rendition of the TT Course provides some of the fastest action the game has to offer, with some devastating downhill sections leading into super-fast corners.

FULL-ON ANALOGUE COMPATIBILITY

There's only one way to play Manx TT SuperBike... and that's with the NiGHTS analogue controller. A masterpiece of design, this controller is perfect of racing games. The flickability of the bike is improved rampantly with the use of the analogue controller, allowing slight cornering as well as full-on power-sliding. The shoulder buttons are used for accelerating and braking, and these are analogue too, just like the handle-bar mounted controls on the original coin-op. Believe us, after a go of Manx on the NiGHTS pad, your old controller will seem pathetic in comparison. The analogue pad is only available if you buy NiGHTS, which is quite a pricey piece of kit at sixty quid, but it's well worth it, particularly as one of the greatest games in the history of software comes with it too! Come on, get real, with games like Manx, NiGHTS, Dark Savior, Duke Nukem 3D and Quake benefiting immensely from NiGHTS pad compatibility, you really need one of these things NOW!



TT IS FOR TIME TRIAL

(Well it's Tourist Trophy actually) The Time Trial mode on the title screen allows you to go for broke and break some records on the four different courses. This is very similar to what the CS Team produced for Sega Rally and Daytona CCE. Choose your track, the number of laps you want (three, five or Free Run), your chosen bike and your preferred Ghost Mode setting.

Ghost Mode produces a see-through replica on-screen for you to race against. Its performance can either be your last lap or your best lap, which is saved onto your Sega memory cart. Now let the racing begin!







INTRODUCING... SATURN MODE

For arcade purists, there is an Arcade mode on the title screen of Manx TT SuperBike, but since this is strictly a one-race wonder, there's little point in actually using it. Particularly, as the on-board Saturn Mode is so much more superior. In this part of the game, three options are available.

1. PRACTISE
This enables you to get to grips with any one of the two courses in both the in normal and reverse mirror incarnations. An essential mode really as mastering the RM TT Course takes quite some doing and you really need all of the help you can get with that particular horror.



2. CHALLENGE
Rather than just take on one course a la Arcade mode, here you take on both courses in their normal and reverse mirror modes, consecutively. The challenge here is to get first place on all four races.



3. SUPERBIKE
This does not become selectable until you have mastered Challenge mode and won all of the races. You get extra, incredibly powerful bikes to thrash to death on this new series of races against super-tough CPU riders!



DOING THE SPLITS

Since link-up activities don't appear to be on the cards for Saturn owners, Manx TT offers a split-screen mode for two players to get to grips with. After the problems of the Daytona CCE mode (where entire parts of the course would disappear), it's good to see a return to form with a fairly decent, speedy split-screen. The update is very smooth, and although the pop-up is disconcerting at times, overall it works really well. It's a shame that some of Rally and DCCEs' options (such as head start and slower car boost) aren't present, but overall, it looks good.



You can use any Saturn Mode bike in the two-player mode.

BIKES

Saturn mode offers a wealth of bikes to choose from, with more appearing in the special SuperBike Challenge section of the game!



Additionally, the Manx conversion team have added in one of the more bizarre aspects of the original arcade game wherein the riders would swap their SuperBikes for sheep and ride the little blighters about! Don't worry... it's a cheat mode!



Tank-Tastic!!!

Combine the score attack element of NIGHTS with the glorious tank test of Return Fire and with the slight strategic element of Soviet Strike, not to mention more visual appeal than the Spice Girls and what have you got? Mass Destruction, a shoot 'em up with a difference. Intrigued? LEE NUTTER investigates.





Remember the point of Mass Destruction is not to finish the game. The aim is to rack up a massive score by causing as much destruction as possible, which is always the most fun part in games like this anyway.

War is not a pleasant thing. It is possibly the greatest ill of mankind that has plagued us throughout our history. Even now in the technological era as we prepare to enter the 21st Century we feel compelled to return to our basic primal instincts of killing other human beings. The justifications? Political or monetary gain. To trivialise such atrocities by creating a videogame for the sole purpose of entertainment whereby individuals can act out their genocidal fantasies would be insensitive and immoral. Or so the Mary Whitehouses of this world would have us believe. I on the other hand am of the more rational viewpoint that if such videogames existed around the turn of the century one of the greatest wars mankind has ever experienced could have been averted. A bored, frustrated, anal retentive Adolf Hitler could have vented his teenage angst on such harmless pastimes and could possibly have grown up to be a well-balanced human being, like me.

Where's all this nonsensical gibberish leading? Well American developers NMS have just put the finishing touches to their latest creation, Mass Destruction. It's a kind of war game with the overwhelming emphasis being on the mindless destruction of buildings, tanks and people. Now whereby some people may regard this as a sign of society's moral decay, it's also incredible fun.

Mass Destruction is reviewed on page 70.

EYE CANDY INDEED!

The first thing that strikes you upon playing Mass Destruction is the simple, yet incredibly impressive looking visuals. Essentially the game adopts a plan view of the action with a slight isometric twist to give everything a more solid feel to it. The fixed view



essentially means that you are unable to view the buildings through 360 degrees but this has allowed the programmers to add an amazing amount of detail making them look quite realistic. Like most things in the game they are constructed out of textured polygons and are fully destructible which gives way to some massive explosions.

Let rip with a couple of carefully aimed missiles and you'll set the whole screen ablaze as the carefully crafted architecture is reduced to a pile of flaming rubble. It looks amazing as you can tell from the shots and is an immensely satisfying feeling. Also noteworthy are the mightily impressive reflections in the water



This selection of shots gives you a rough idea of the massive variety in the backgrounds and architecture featured throughout the game. From cranes to windmills, skyscrapers and even a space shuttle which like just about everything else in the game is fully destructable. Take a look.



That's what we like to see in videogames, massive explosions. The bigger and noisier the better. And they don't get any bigger or noisier than those seen in Mass Destruction. Turn your telly up full and it sounds like you're in the middle of an earthquake. And it'll annoy your neighbours too.



Improving somewhat on the likes of Soviet Strike, in Mass Destruction each of the enemy buildings and scenery have several states of destruction. Turn your flame thrower on a sky scraper and one explosion later, it appears to be destroyed. But do not be deceived, as if you continue firing you'll realise that it can in fact be destroyed further enabling you to rack up even more points. The trick is to keep firing until there's virtually nothing left and you'll be assured of a previously unattainable high score. Remember, the more destruction the more points you get.

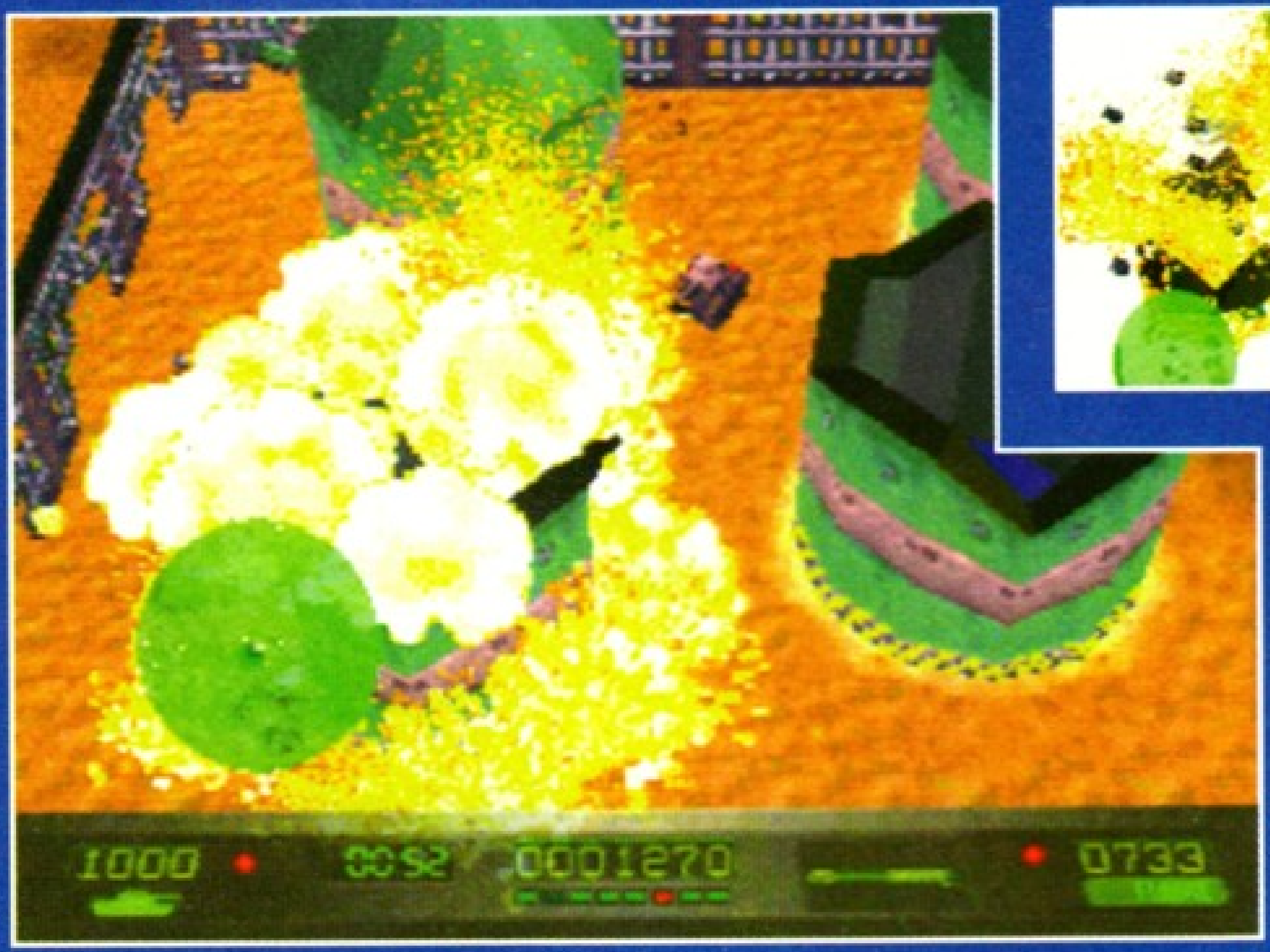








Rather than have all the levels looking remarkably similar, there are four different types of environment featured throughout Mass Destruction to give it a bit more variety. The city setting features plenty of skyscrapers which are completely destructible whereas the desert setting features native villages and plenty of sand. A muddy wasteland setting is in there as well as a snowy Arctic setting featuring frozen lakes aplenty and even Evergreen trees. Cool!







One of the most enjoyable parts of Mass Destruction is careering aimlessly through suburbia destroying all the civilian housing. Cool.







of your tank and the ensuing explosions around it.

Such meticulous attention to detail gives you a vague idea as to the amount of effort that has been put into producing a highly polished and visually appealing game. There's a lesson there to be learnt for many developers. The programmers have also thought to keep the on-screen display to a minimum as the action should be your primary focus. As such only your score, amount of armour, time elapsed and your selected weapon appear on the small display panel.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the game however is that it all runs at an ultra-smooth 60 frames per second. This remains constant no matter how full the screen is at any one time. That's exactly the same speed as Saturn VF2 and considerably better than this month's other tank game Return Fire. This is even more impressive when you consider the sheer size of the spectacular explosions with absolutely no slowdown whatsoever.



Your tank doesn't take kindly to the water so stick to the land.



That's right, even the palm trees can be burned to the ground.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

At first glance Mass Destruction would not appear to differ that much from the majority of shoot 'em ups. Preceding each level you are treated to a mission briefing where your primary and secondary objectives are outlined in full. These are usually along the lines of cutting off the power supply, rendering the docks inoperable or cutting off the water supply. But you don't need a degree in engineering to carry this out, all you need is a flame thrower. You see although the mission objectives give you different things to do, but in a similar way to Soviet Strike what they effectively mean is burn everything to the ground.

There are also bonus objectives not outlined in the mission briefing which involve destroying other targets such as civilian villages. All of these can be found by calling up the map which pinpoints their exact location. Once the main objectives have been carried out in full, an extraction zone appears where you are to rendezvous with your helicopter which transports you to the >>

The sandy desert stage reminds us somewhat of the original Desert Strike game, except on the ground obviously. That's not the only similarity either.



The numbers that pop up all over the place in the midst of all the chaotic explosions are the amount of points awarded for the destruction you've caused.



Though the graphics may look quite simple, the attention to detail with cool graphical touches such as reflections in the water make this game visually outstanding.



>> next mission. But if only it was that easy. You see the enemy don't want to go down without a fight and as such there are shed loads of enemy tanks, choppers, soldiers, jeeps and planes scattered about the place attempting to thwart your every move.

There are hundreds of them and your tank only has a limited amount of armour before it bites the big one. So it becomes a case of kill or be killed as you attempt to destroy the enemy before they blow you to bits. This is no easy task and you'll find yourself spending much of your time hiding around buildings, dodging bullets, looking for health power ups and readying yourself for a surprise attack which is where the on screen radar comes in handy.

Destroying the local civilian villages may seem a tad harsh, but they're in fact hiding the rebel army whom you are attempting to destroy.

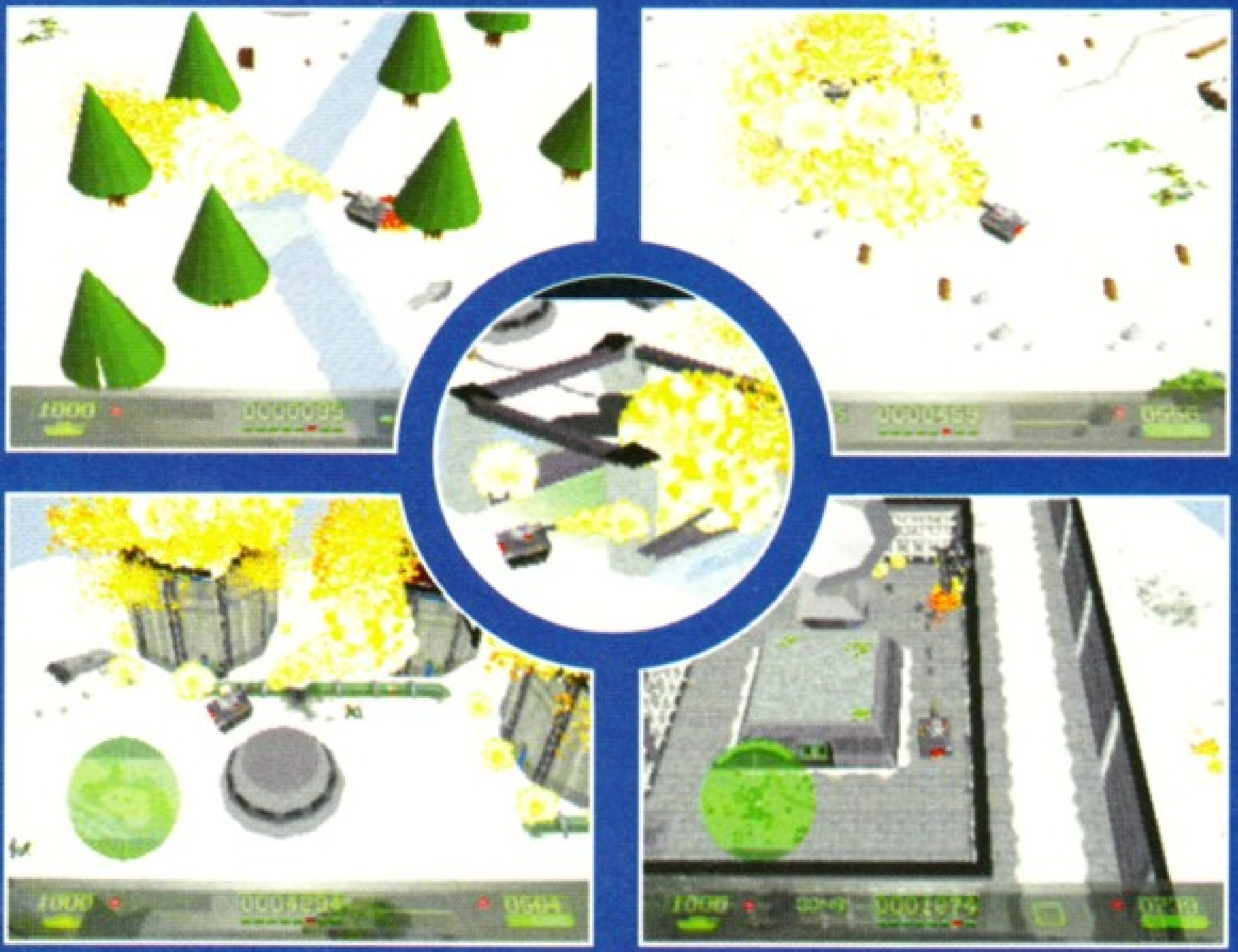




So how does Mass Destruction differ from other shoot 'em ups? Well it differs in one major respect. The whole point of Mass Destruction is not necessarily to progress to the end of the game but to amass the highest possible score. This is then entered on the high score table for you to come back and attempt to beat. It's a score attack game you see, in much the same way as NiGHTS and games of old. Each of the multitude of buildings, soldiers and tanks are all worth a certain amount of points when they've been destroyed. So it becomes a case of trying to cause as much destruction as is possible to get the biggest score. The strategic missions are merely a way by which to progress to the next level where more destruction awaits you.

WILL IT LAST?

For me the big question about Mass Destruction was whether it was going to have the lastability needed to make it a top class Saturn game. It came as quite a shock when we found out that there was going to be no two-player option included and so naturally we were quite disappointed. A bit of two-player capturing the enemy flag type of action would have gone down a treat and made Mass Destruction unbeatable. As it stands, with this being absent and the game itself focussing on short term arcade like thrills of destroying everything in sight for no apparent reason, I had my doubts as to whether it could keep



Without a doubt the best of the four different environments for you to roam around and cause mischief and mayhem is the snowy one. It features some excellent scenery such as Christmas trees and frozen lakes throughout, oh and the odd nuclear reactor here and there too.



Due to the inability of your tank to pass through any water deeper than a puddle, it becomes necessary to locate the bridges along the river banks and destroy the roadblocks that prohibit your passage.

More destructive fun, this time in the nuclear plant where the basic aim is to cut off the enemy power supply by blowing the whole place up.



my attention for more than a couple of hours. Especially when you take into account my notoriously short attention span.

However after spending an entire weekend playing Mass Destruction my doubts were laid to rest. The score attack element provides a lengthy challenge with you returning time after time to beat you previous high score by causing as much destruction as is humanly possible. The three tanks you can choose from with varying strengths of armour effectively provide you with three difficulty settings and with around 25 levels to conquer it'll take you quite some time to reach the end. And I never seem to tire of driving around burning buildings to the ground with the spectacular flame thrower. It's awesome.

TANKED UP

There are three different types of tanks at your disposal for your sortie into enemy territory each of which are quite similar in appearance but differ considerably in terms of speed and armour. It becomes a trade off whereby you can have more armour for less speed and vice versa. It's down to personal preference and what tactics you decide to employ, whether it's of the hit and run variety or the the more manly stand and fight approach. Each of the tanks all retain the same lethal arsenal of weapons and also the rotating gun turret on top. This can be rotated by use of the shoulder buttons which effectively means you can shoot at enemies behind you whilst you're running away. Not that we'd ever run away. But big girls might. Also of interest is the realistic dynamics that have been employed in the way your tank interacts with the environment, with it reacting realistically to every obstacle, bump and dip. Driving through small pools is no problem either, it is a tank after all, but if you are ever submerged for more than a few seconds the body becomes starved of oxygen thus causing the death of yourself and your crew. So not to be recommended then.







DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONS

Obviously if you are to overcome your formidable opponent you're going to need some pretty cool weapons capable of doing some serious damage. Well luckily for you that's exactly what you've got as NMS have kitted your tank out with no less than eight different weapons capable of wreaking havoc upon the enemy. The Vortex is among the most impressive causing huge amounts of damage resulting in massive explosions which are accompanied by some amazing booming sound effects. At the other end of the scale of course there is the chaingun which is relatively ineffective and more importantly doesn't look very spectacular.

However, exhaustive use of your weapons inevitably leads to you rapidly running out of ammo, so it becomes necessary to locate and collect the desired power-up to replenish your resources. These are often hidden inside enemy buildings which need to be destroyed before you can retrieve them. But then if you had the weapons to destroy them, you wouldn't need to get the power ups in the first place.

CHAINGUN: The chaingun is unspectacular and relatively ineffective and shouldn't be used on anything other than foot soldiers for that reason. It doesn't ever seem to run out though so it may come in handy when you're all out of ammo.



MISSILE: The missiles are the heat seekers which when fired automatically target the enemy and destroy them. These are best used when you don't have a clear shot of the target as they home in on it and even turn around corners.



VORTEX: Fire the Vortex and a ring of fire envelopes your tank and destroys anything within its range looking quite spectacular. These are in limited supply however so should only be used in emergencies when you're surrounded.



MINE: If you drop a mine you're given a couple of seconds to make a hasty retreat before it becomes armed. If any vehicles pass over it thereafter they'll be toast, but this also includes your tank too.



MORTAR: You only get eight mortars so you ought to be careful not to waste them. As they are shot high into the air before crashing to earth they are ideal for attacking enemy forces on the other side of a wall without them managing to hit your tank.



HI-EXPLOSIVE: The high-explosive shells have a long range and can be fired in quick succession. You have shed loads of them and they're also quite deadly on impact creating a nice explosion.



SHELL: The shells are another pretty wimpy weapon as they are only slightly more effective than the chaingun and fire in rapid succession in the same way. They should only be used as a last resort for when you run out of the more manly weapons.

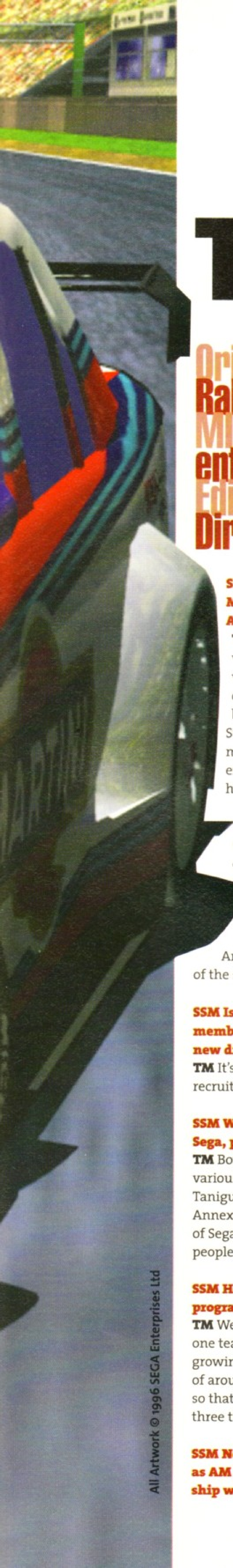


FLAME THROWER: Possibly the most spectacular and fun to use weapon, ideal for showing off when your mates come round. It has a devastating effect on the local architecture and particularly amusing is when you turn it on the soldiers and watch them flee with their ass on fire.





OPEL
OPEL TEAM JOEST
OPEL
BÄUMLER
BOSCH
MARTINI
Alfa Romeo
MARTINI
MICHELIN
O.Z WHEELS
MAGNETI MARELLI
BÄUMLER
men's fashion



SEGA Touring Car Championship

Originally part of the AM3 team behind the stunning Sega Rally Championship and Manx TT SuperBike, TETSUYA MIZUGUCHI continues to provide us with extremely entertaining, ground-breaking videogames... Our Japan Editor, WARREN HARROD caught up with this prolific Director of the newly established AM Annex...

SSM You achieved considerable success with Sega Rally and Manx TT as part of AM3. Why did you decide to set up the AM Annex?

TETSUYA MIZUGUCHI The AM3 R&D department is very big with maybe around 100 staff. Because of this, there are a wide variety of excellent staff, each with their own distinctive colour. At that time it was very good but it became a little too big so I talked to the general manager, Mr Oguchi and Mr H Suzuki about creating a new department. Even in development it's good to have various flavours, so all things considered, rather than the AM 1, 2, 3, why not have a separate team heading in a slightly different direction? The result was the new AM Annex. Even though there's no number attached we thought why not let's give this area a try and so we started! Thus, we separated. I think this was a very positive choice for Sega because with this the real width of Sega's power could be realised. It's true that Sega Rally and Manx TT were quite successful but well, that was then. And certainly there are a fair number of people here in the team that have experience of Sega Rally. However, for AM Annex that was just one flavour. With time the other flavours of the staff will continue to grow bigger. I think that's the reason!

SSM Is the AM Annex composed of just Sega Rally and Manx TT members or did you recruit new members when you set up the new division?

TM It's not composed of just Sega Rally and Manx TT members, we recruited new members as well.

SSM Where did these new members come from? From outside Sega, perhaps?

TM Both from inside and outside, from various places. For example, Mr Taniguchi [Assistant Producer at AM Annex] came from a separate section of Sega altogether. These kind of people are here.

SSM How big is AM Annex in terms of programmers, producers, artists etc?

TM We're still small. Really, about just one team's worth but we're continually growing. At the moment there's a staff of around 16. I'd like us to grow quickly so that we could be able to do two or three titles at the same time.

SSM Now you are more independent as AM Annex, what is your relationship with the other AM divisions? Do you all work individually or do you swap ideas?

TM Being AM Annex doesn't mean that we're especially independent. What AM Annex is doing is very similar to the other AM 1, 2, 3 divisions so we do exchange various information and programs between us. After all, we're all part of Sega and thus cooperate and help each other. Maybe here we can't do something but elsewhere they can so we exchange ideas. Also, in regard to something, "we think this but what do you think?" This kind of mutual consultation exists amongst us.

SSM Do the AM teams often get together and discuss these ideas?

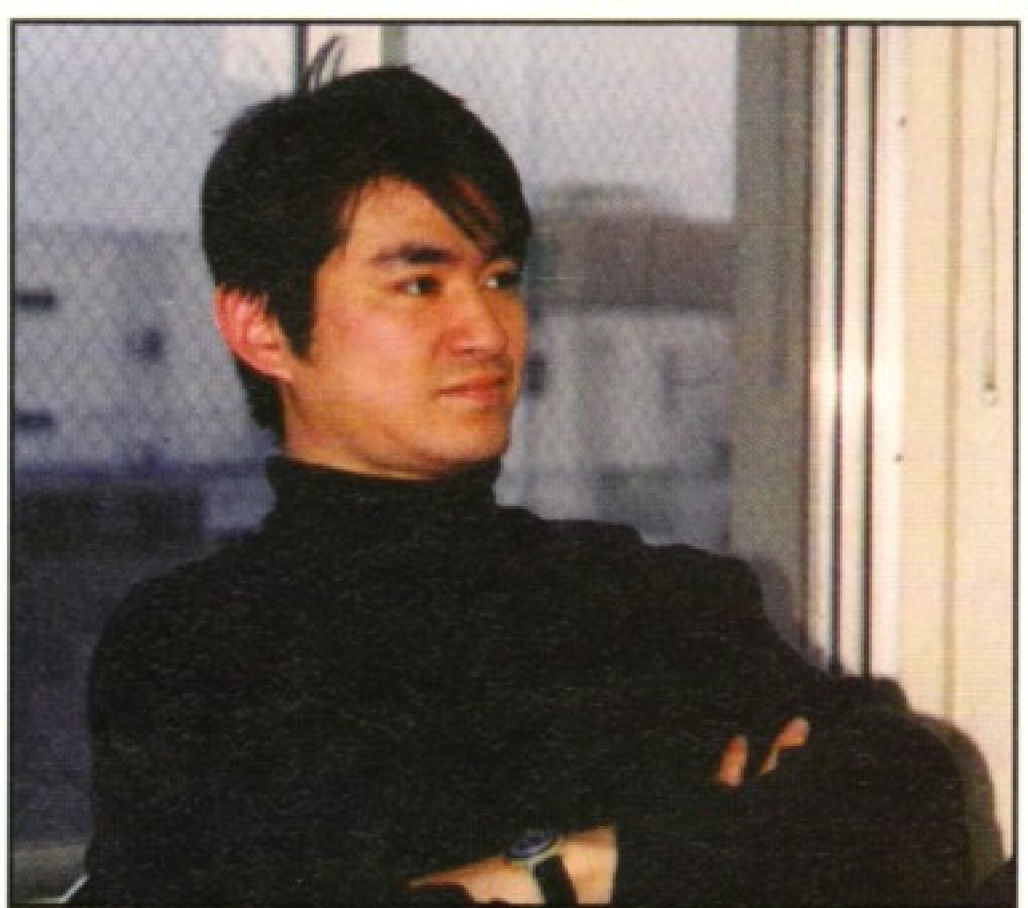
TM At the manager level they would do this but for the average person then just on a normal everyday basis you meet people around and discuss things. All in all, there is a lot of interchange.

SSM What measures are taken to make sure that different AM divisions aren't working on very similar projects?

TM There aren't any particular measures. Rather, for the staff here, their skills and ideas are different for each of them, so even if they all created a car game they would all be different. I take great care with this area. There is a large number of those here, both the designers and the programmers, who like cars so creating car games is really great. However, if the staff want to create something different then we would all work together to complete it in that form. That's how we consider it. In addition, it goes without saying that the producers, me and others at this level also have things we'd like to do. From these areas there is a skillful mix.

SSM If each team knows something about the other teams' projects then I don't suppose there's much of a problem is there?

TM Each respective idea has originality I think. For example, in AM2 there are a lot of programmers so for Virtua Fighter and other games with that kind of movement system etc there are a lot of people who like doing that sort of thing. The result is realism. That's become the key word.



Tetsuya Mizuguchi aims to continue the tradition of excellence established with his arcade portfolio.

SSM AM Annex games seem to concentrate on realistic representations of motorsports. Will this theme continue with future games?

TM Yes it will. It's not everything but it's one of the core areas that we focus on. This concept expresses the character of the staff here in this team.

SSM How about motorsports other than cars and motorcycles?



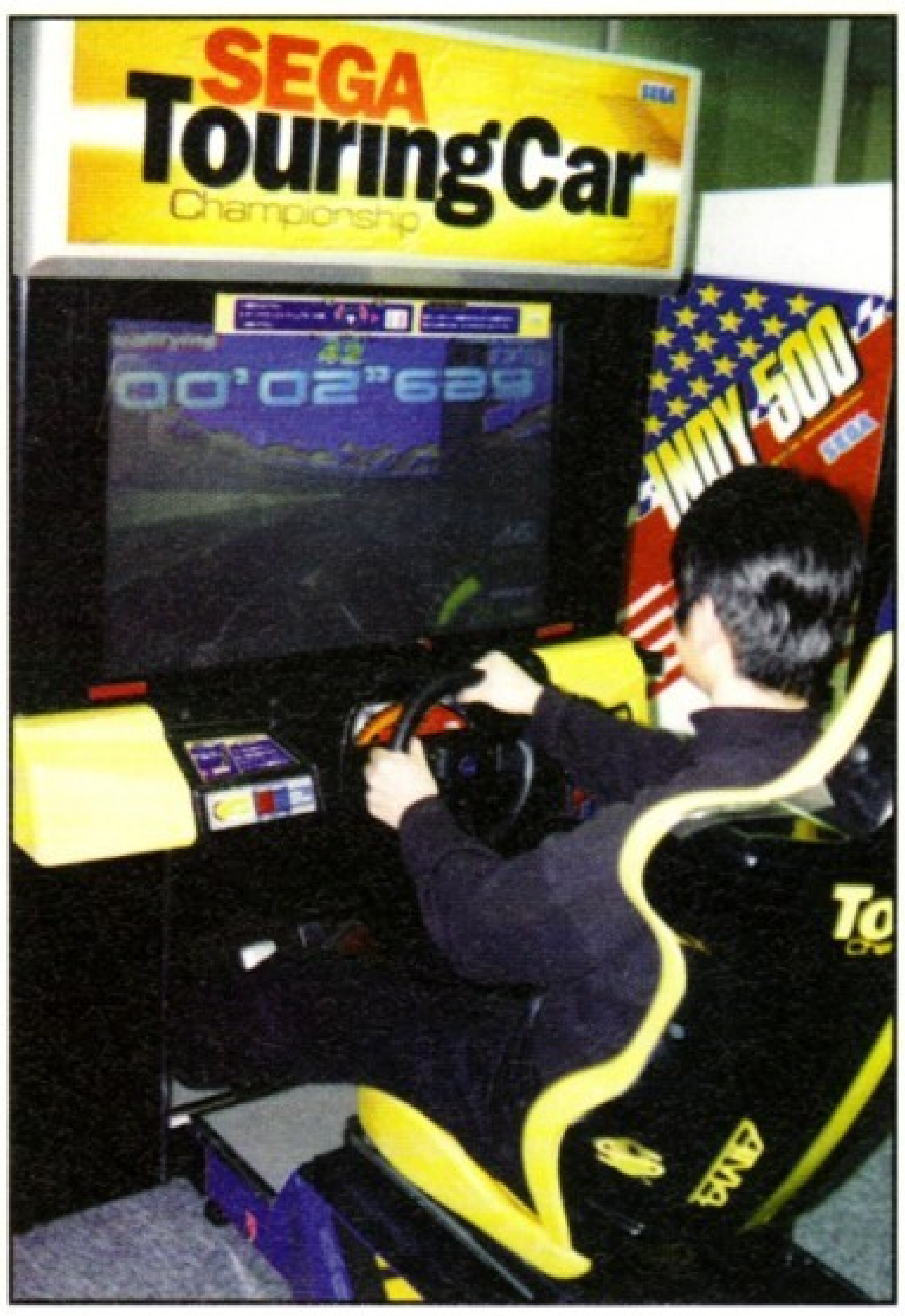


With Sega Touring Car Championship, Mr Mizuguchi aimed to capture the spirit of the touring cars battling around the race track.

TM We certainly plan to do that. We're steadily progressing towards doing that. However, if you look at the motorsports then it's the area of motorsports reality not the motorsports itself that has become the core. For example, for marine motorsports it's marine reality and for flying motorsports it's flying reality. Whatever it is we'll always choose to pursue reality.

SSM What does the team do when not creating videogames?
TM Every one is different. There are games players amongst us, people who play sports and there are people who like travelling. The instant a big game project has been completed it's common for almost everyone to want to go on vacation. In addition, a lot of people go on a trip to think about the next project. Often, several people will go together. It's what we call location hunting. This time to recharge one's batteries is essential so just about everybody does it.

SSM Have AM Annex been impressed or inspired by any particular development team on the arcade or home formats?
TM I think that everybody's ideas are different but, personally, I like Sonic. Sonic was an incredible creation. The core staff, Mr Yuji Naka and Mr Naoto Oshima have an amazing enthusiasm for Sonic. They love him.



The distinctive Sega cabinets are the results of collaboration with the hardware wing of Sega Enterprises, AM4.

SSM Where did you get the idea for Sega Touring Car Championship?
TM About two years ago, at the time we were still making Manx TT, there was a single video and a magazine in my desk. When I watched the DTM (German Touring Car Championship) video for the first time it had an incredible impact. That was the first time I had the concept of making a game of it. When I saw the inside of the cars they looked just like F1 Grand Prix. Incredible! The race was full of cars crashing into each other. The competition looked so straight forward and unreserved. Also, all the countries are different so it has a nationalistic battle atmosphere to it. However, at that time, nobody knew anything about Touring Car. Even now there aren't many people who know about it. Anyway, with that significance, it was in my drawer all that time. I thought it was very interesting. Then, in exactly spring last year we got around to talking about having a go at Touring Car. So, in the beginning it was through seeing the video and the magazine that it caught my interest.

SSM What kind of research did you undertake when you started out on the project?
TM It's as I said before but Touring Car is a nationalistic battle. It has that feeling to it. I wanted to create a game where all the people of the world could enjoy playing as one. On the other hand, Sega Rally is very individualistic where your own skill can shine through.

SSM What kind of research did you undertake when you started out on the project?
TM All the staff watched videos and read magazines and books about Touring Car any number of times. They also went to see real Touring Car races. There were a lot of staff who rode as passengers in the Touring Cars and all the main programmers were driven around some of the circuits by championship drivers. On top of that, we also hired a circuit for the day and borrowed some pro-race team cars. We then drove around ourselves! We drove around the circuits with our helmets on many times. We did a fair amount of various things. In addition, the designers went location hunting. They took their cameras to places in Germany and Finland etc and saw various views from the circuits and lots of town landscapes and scenery.

SSM What sort of assistance did you receive from the Touring Car teams?
TM This time, firstly, we received the help of Mr Naoki Hattori. He's a pretty famous driver who has driven in Formula Japan and Touring Car etc. During the final stages of fine-tuning he came in and test drove Touring Car. He gave us advice on the various aspects of the game. In addition to that, at the time we hired the race circuit the C-1 Race Team gave us various advice as well.

SSM Once again, all of the sponsorship stickers are as exactly as they are in real life. What kind of deal did you have to do to get these stickers in the game?
TM That was Mr Taniguchi's most troublesome area. It wasn't so much difficult, more like time consuming. In a fairly short period of time we had to meet a lot of people and get numerous approvals etcetera. I myself went to Europe and the United States around three times and Mr Taniguchi also went once. In practice, we were checking whether the designs were okay and whether or not their appearance in this kind of game was a problem. However, that doesn't mean that we especially set out to create an ITC (International Touring Car Championship) game. This time Sega wanted to promote a touring race, so in order to do that, we did a presentation for each car maker. At that time we told them that we didn't particularly want to do an ITC game. We wanted to do Sega's Touring Car Championship so we asked them to give us their approval and join us. We basically asked them to put in the cars that they would like to put in, however, of course we made requests. The result being the four cars in the game now. There are 3 ITC machines and Toyota. Fundamentally, it took a lot of time for Mr Taniguchi had to get approval for every single one of the stickers, Mobil, Castrol etcetera. It was hard going.









SSM Games like Sega Rally, Manx TT and Sega Touring Car Championship would seem to have greater popularity in Europe than in Japan. Would you agree with this? If so, is this a deliberate corporate plan?
TM Yes, I'd agree with that opinion. This was a deliberate plan throughout. This story goes back to the time of Sega Rally but at that time the car racing game Daytona was a big hit, especially in the USA. It was also a hit in Europe and Japan. If you look at the global market then you have



Asia which includes Japan and also Australia, America with both North and South America and Europe, along with Africa. You can divide it into three. In Europe there aren't many games that will definitely be well received so in the case of Sega Rally it was our aim, in particular, to make a game that would be a big hit there. After all, everyone knows that Europe is a large market. Other than that, Manx TT was another game that was well received in Europe. We certainly considered this.

SSM Did this have any effect on the design of the game?
TM I can't say I'm too aware of any European influences, although in actuality a lot of the landscape and scenery that appears is very European isn't it? In actual fact Europe was the origin of motorsports. However, one of the courses in Sega Rally was from America, Yosemite Park. At that time I went to America so I know a little about Yosemite Park. Thus, it's not completely European. We thought a little about America as well.

SSM Did the team get to race with any of the Touring Cars?
TM We didn't actually participate in any real Touring Car races, however, we did drive the touring cars. We also went several times to see the races. Three or four times I think.

SSM How realistic are the game's cars compared to the real thing?
TM That's tricky but, well, the fundamental areas are not incorrect. The fundamental areas are real. However, in order that it's easy to drive for everyone we've changed it a little. That's because the real cars are so difficult that probably no-one could drive them. We devised it so that as many people as possible could feel the atmosphere of the real touring cars. Thus we made it fairly mild.

SSM How difficult is it to draw a line between the game's realism and accessibility?
TM This is difficult because it's a theme that could go on for eternity. If it becomes too realistic then playing the game becomes too difficult and it loses its appeal. On the other hand, if it's too easy to play then there's the possibility that playing it will soon become unsatisfying. Just how difficult to make it is a very complex problem. It's difficult each and very time you make a game, but with out fail you have to get the balance of realism and playability right.

SSM In order to do this how do you get player feedback?
TM For the average player we do location tests.

SSM What kind of feedback did you get?
TM As you'd expect we got a lot of opinions saying it was a little difficult. In the end Touring Car was a difficult game. However, we decided that this time we wanted to make this type of game. The game is a touch on the hard side but it couldn't be helped. Because of this, it might be a little hard for the beginner and the average player but if you enjoy it just once you won't be able to stop playing it. Everyone is ensnared. Because of this I think it's a game you can keep playing for a long time.

SSM What kind of design process is used to put the course maps together?
TM This is done by our director, Mr Sasaki, who created all the course maps. However, both the the car engine and the courses are essential so if the engine changes so does the course and vice versa. Thus it's very difficult to get the game's realism and playability balance just right. That means trying to make it a "Fun to Drive" game. In order to make it fun you need to have interesting courses. That's another tough area. This time we had very little time to do this but usually you create the courses over and over again. You then test them and change them, test them and change, again and again, making the courses more and more interesting. That's the actual process. Sometimes you need to make the course a little more difficult and sometimes you need to make them a little more simple.

SSM How easy was the Model 2 board to use when it came to the programming? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
TM That's not really for me to say. You should ask the programmers that question. However, we didn't have any problems using the Model 2 board. Although the edges to the cars are a little rough, I would have liked them smoother, this doesn't have any relation to the game's playability or how enjoyable it is. Overall, I think that the Model 2 is an extremely good board. With regards to weaknesses it doesn't really have any limitations, but, it has a lot of strengths. If only because it can do real time games alone, it's a great board.

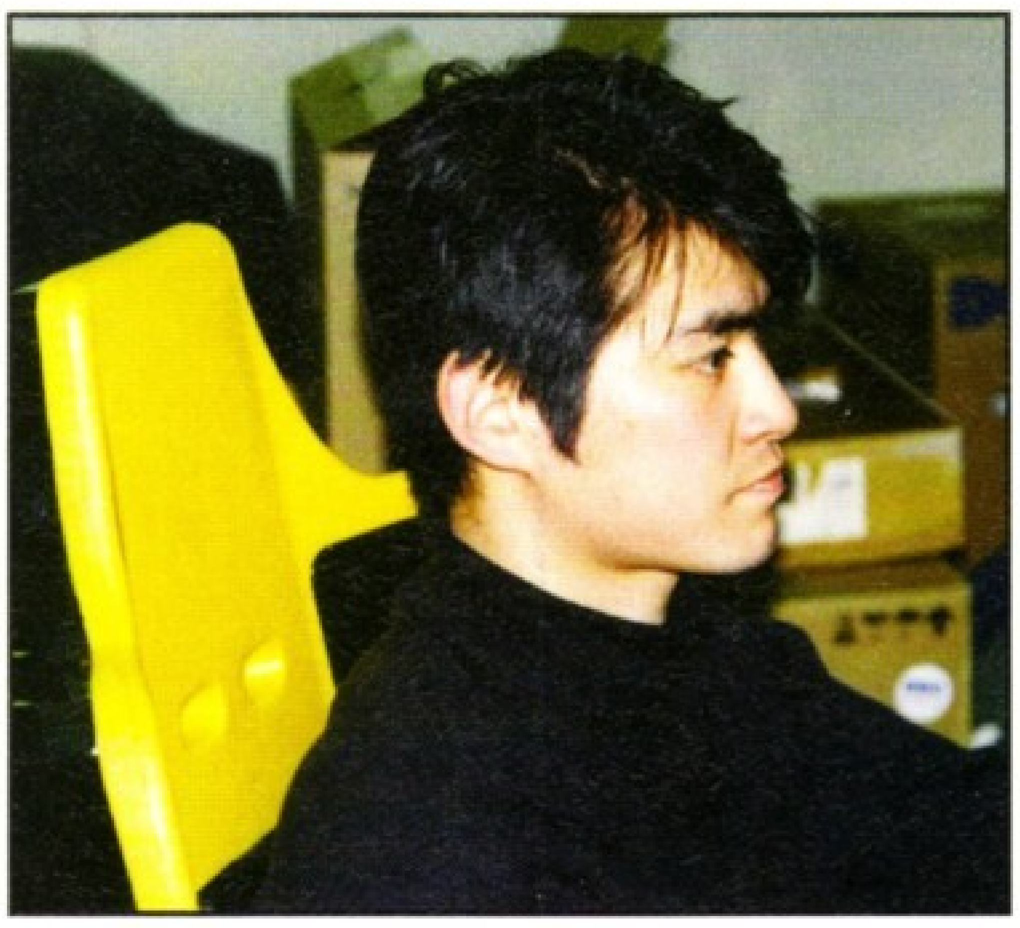
SSM All of your games have supported multiple players. Do you alter any of the game logic between the multiple and single-player modes in order to heighten the experience?
TM Well, if you take a single-player game and try to force it into a multiplayer game then it won't be interesting. Likewise, a multi-player game made into a single-player game. This is a major change to the game's concept. If in the beginning you want the game game to have a multi-player concept then you should discard the single-player and devote yourself to the multiplayer. The opposite is also true, so it depends on the game concept. As for Touring Car, we wanted to make the

Authenticity and realism are the keys to success with games like Sega Rally, Manx TT and the new Sega Touring Car Championship. The vehicles, track designs and sponsorship are all based closely on the real thing.

Sega Touring Car uses the Model 2 board to excellent effect, and AM Annex have plans to continue using this technology as well as the newly established Model 3 board behind Virtua Fighter 3 and Scud Race.





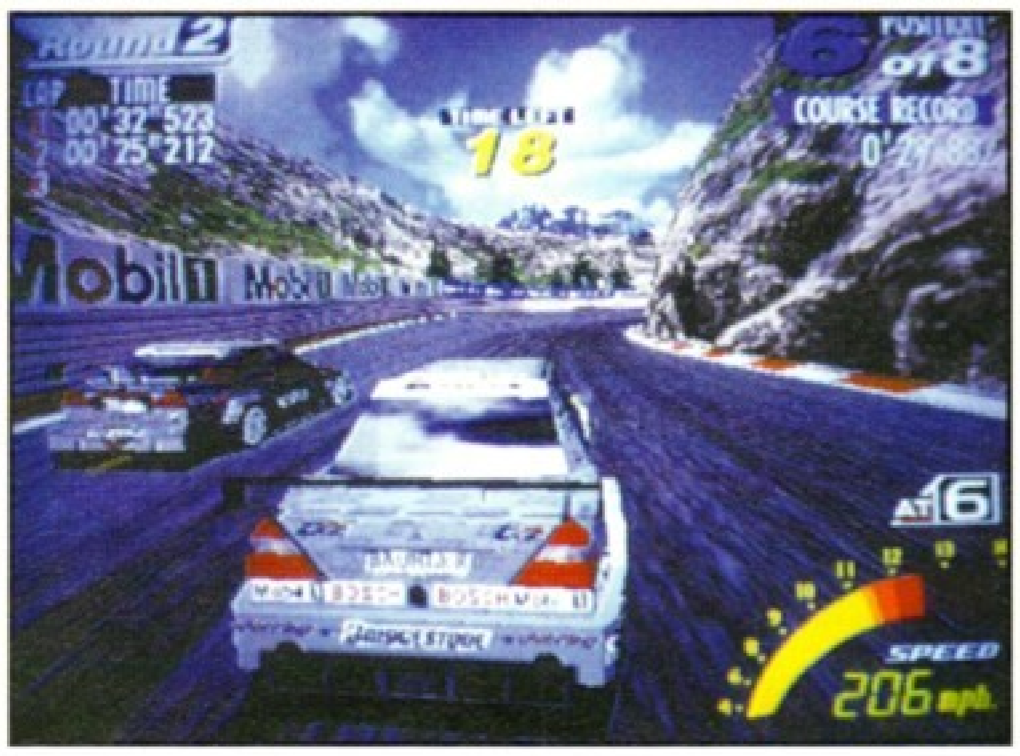


Mr Mizuguchi takes a test drive on Sega Touring Car Championship at Sega's R&D headquarters in Japan.

type of race game where everyone could enjoy battling together, so naturally, from the very beginning it was our concept to have it multi-player.

SSM Battling enemy cars is much more important in Touring Car than it is in say Sega Rally. What efforts have you gone to in producing good artificial intelligence for the enemy cars in Sega Touring Car?

TM All the AI was done by a single programmer, Mr Yamamoto. When it comes down to it, the speed of the cars is very fast isn't it? You really do have the sensation of racing away, outrunning the other cars. It's a great feeling. To get the balance right so you can enjoy this kind of racing battle is very difficult. If you are always entangled in battles with cars that are deliberately fighting against you then it soon becomes annoying. Of course the car battles must be fun, but for all those who want to break free and drive away then the enemy cars can be be too tenacious so we have to use our discretion and make allowances for that area. If not, then the skillful players will increasingly advance ahead while the poor players will correspondingly be left behind. For them the game will lose its interest and then what will happen? For the programmers this area is troublesome I think.



Balancing realism with fun is a hard task when creating videogames like this.

SSM When you went to the Touring Car races did you see a lot of various driving tactics?

TM Yes, we saw them. As you'd expect we always saw the tactics where you keeping hitting your opponent's car. I think because of this it became more and more interesting.

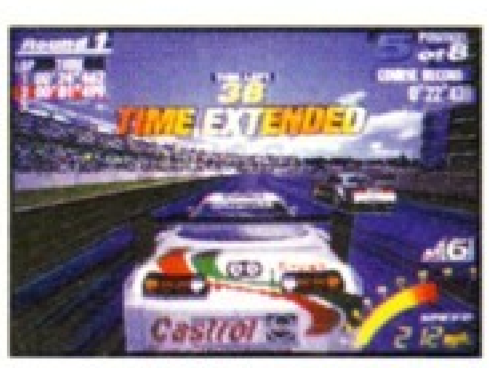
SSM How would you compare the AI of the enemy cars' tactics to a real person's tactics?

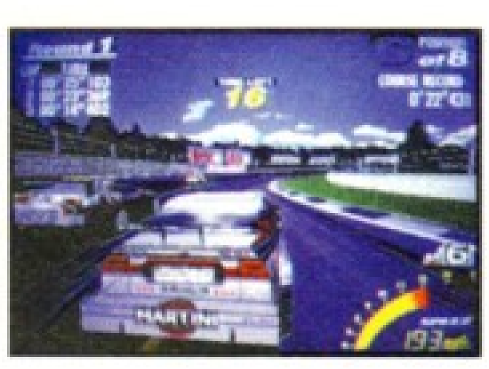
TM Of course the driving tactics of real people are incredible. It's everybody's aim to be able to have AI as good as a real person but to create a game where the enemy cars are almost life-like would take a lot of time. It's not a simple matter.

SSM In other race games the enemy cars always seem to follow the same driving pattern but in Touring Car they use various driving tactics don't they?

TM If you make the enemies too strong, it was the same for when we did Manx TT, then in tight spots you'd always end up entangled, battling the enemies. You get the feeling that the game is playing with you! If that sort of thing happens then you don't know whether the you are getting better or worse. I really think that's a tough area. When it comes to the balance of the AI in Touring Car there are still a few problems but in regard to the car fights I'm sure we did a fairly good job of getting it right. However, it's a pity for the average and beginner players who get stuck behind. If you don't get better then it can lose its interest.

Latest rumours seem to indicate that the excellent Virtual On CS team will bring the cool Touring Car from Model 2 to Saturn. Expect first pictures soon!





SSM Sega's arcade games in general seem to be far more popular than its competitors. Why do you think this is? Is it just down to superior technology, or it something else?

TM If you compare Sega's arcade games to other arcade games then there are a lot of Sega games that are more realistic. That's probably one aspect of Sega, reality. Of course, in Sega there are various levels but the average person really aims to be an entertainer. Maybe that's one part of the brain behind Sega and thus Sega's character. Certainly, I think that Sega has excellent technology but you can't make a good game with just technology. If you don't have a good idea as well as the technology then it's just not possible. Sega definitely has a good balance of the two.

SSM Arcade technology seems to become outdated quicker than home technology. Do you think we have seen the full limits of the Model 2's power now that Model 3 has arrived?

TM The Model 2 can still do great games. Of course the Model 3 has a higher capability for handling graphics but the Model 2 is still alive. On the other hand, there might even be some areas where the Model 2 is better so it doesn't mean for certain that all the games are going to be Model 3 from now on. The Model 2 really is a good board.

SSM Do you plan to continue with Model 2 for the time being or are you investigating the new Model 3 board?

TM Of course, Sega will continue using the Model 2. I think that maybe we'll use both of them.

SSM Technology has opened up new genres - for example, without Model 1 there would have been no 3D fighting games. What future do you think there is for new games concepts with even more advanced technology such as Model 3?

TM I think there are new genres. If so then they might not be games. I don't really know. If it's interesting and enjoyable then you can create just about anything can't you? You could consider all sorts of things. Not just video games in particular but maybe carnival games for example. There are various possibilities.

SSM Can you describe your relationship with AM4, who produce your arcade cabinets? What kind of design process do you have when designing them?

TM We have a very strong relationship with AM4. Without AM4 we couldn't produce games. Likewise, without software there wouldn't be any games. Therefore, we really have to mutually support each other. It's a good relationship. From this, all sorts of ideas spring forth. This time let's choose a big screen, let's go for these speakers etc. We're always bouncing ideas off each other. In the end we'll fix and idea an then we'll start from there. In actual practice, during development there's a lot of give and take but the producer will in outline choose a something and finally in the end the producer will make the decision and request AM4 to build it. It's a kind of husband and wife relationship.

SSM Do you sometimes have arguments?

TM Yes, we do. Fairly often.

SSM At what point in the game's development do you consider the design of the cabinet?



The multi-player angle really comes to the fore in the Touring Car twin-type.



TM We decide somewhere along the way. About midway through the process we first inform them of the image we have and then we make various prototypes. Then, while all this is going on, at some point we'll settle on a design.

SSM Does the cabinet have an influence on the game?
TM Yes, it probably does. That's why you develop with the game and cabinet as a single concept. If the producers don't consider the cabinet's image from the very beginning then no matter how well the design process goes you won't be able to come up with one that's really good. The cabinet is very important.

SSM With Sega Rally and Manx TT, you worked very hard indeed to get the sound effects extremely authentic. What processes did you go through with Sega Touring Car to produce the best sound possible?
TM This time it was due to the development of the MPEG board. Up to now we've had to use computer programs to extract sound material that is built into the computer chips but we've discarded that. Instead, we can take the sound recorded at a studio, enter it onto the M-PEG board and play it. Thus, we've been able to have outside musicians perform for us. That's a big factor for one. We really wanted to do that.

SSM How important is the finished cabinet when it comes to the sound?
TM It doesn't make any sense having great sound coming out of speakers you can't hear. It goes without saying that in order to have the music etcetera heard as clearly as possible you need to create a good sound system. In addition, the cabinet's design will also have to change accordingly. This time we wanted to try placing the speakers like such, so the design of the chair had to be changed. However, if it has to change too much then it becomes a problem. There's the cost to think about as well. All in all, you have to consider the balance of this area very carefully.

SSM The music in Sega Touring Car does stand out - did a Japanese pop band record the tracks for you?
TM In the first place, we got in contact with a high level studio, AVEX TRAX who gave us songs from Belgium, Italy and also Japan. As for the Trance Techno songs, they were from four Japanese musicians who participated with us. We didn't use any popular bands. The Belgium and Italian musicians are fairly well known but the others are just young musicians, popular with the younger fans, who wanted to go on to do techno. We held some auditions at various places but we didn't have much time so it was only in Japan. By considering the future prospects of the various musicians we auditioned we finally ended up picking these four people. From now on we're going to regard the music as very important so, thinking about the future, we'd like to discover and raise new talent more and more. Up to now the music has been circulating around just the clubs and DJs. We'd like to use the wider field of games as well.

SSM What particular themes did you have in mind for the music?
TM Our first image was a good drum-bass. By drum-bass, I mean it's got a unique rhythm but the sound of the drums and bass need to be simple so that it's right for playing the game. At the time when we were thinking about music that could help the player concentrate on the game, we really wanted to have that kind of music. However, after talking to the director and others we came to the opinion that this alone was a little too dreary so we included the songs as well. In addition, we choose it so that everyone could select their own favourite tune whilst driving. That's the way it all came about.

SSM What kind of hardware is there on the Model 2 board for all things audio? Are there any limitations you have to deal with?
TM Certainly it's got limitations. For example, it's limited to having so and so many minutes of music entered on the board depending on the quality level. However, we were luckily just in time because we were able to use the MPEG board which is the new hardware used for the audio. This is the first time we've used it.

SSM Do you think that realistically, the quality of music and sound effects can be improved in the future? For example, could any form of surround sound work in the arcades?
TM Yes I do. You have to keep improving! For the current arcade games, I think that the one think that is lagging behind is the sound. I'm convinced that sound has a major influence on people. Therefore, I personally think that I'd like to see people enjoying more games with higher quality sound where both the device and the contents have been brought closer together. Thus, if surround sound was available I'd probably use it, if 3D sound was available I'd probably use that also. If it's good and makes better sound then I'd really like to make an effort to use it.

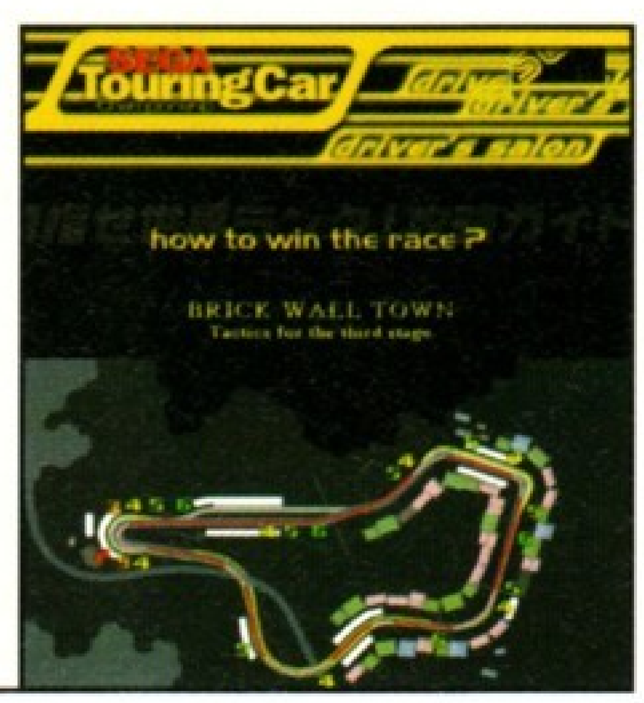
SSM Do you have any message for your fans in England?
TM If you have access to the Touring Car homepage you can enter your own time and then you can participate in a World Wide Time Attack Competition! By all means, please join is. Also, please look forward to our next game as well.

TOURING CAR ON THE INTERNET

http://www.sega.co.jp/sega/arcade/touring/

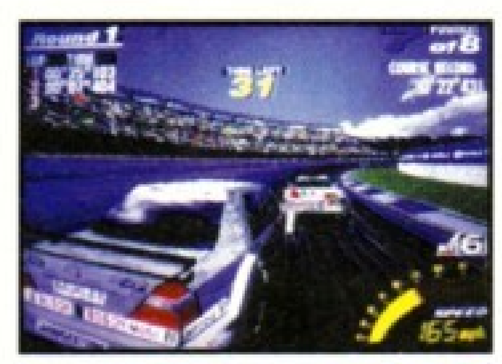
All computer-equipped Saturn owners are probably well aware of the brilliant web presence Sega of Japan have built up (address: http://www.sega.co.jp). However, AM Annex have recently set up a Sega Touring Car Championship area of the site, which is dedicated as much to the sport as it is to the videogame. Seriously, this is one of the best game-based sites we've seen covering every single aspect of the game along with user interaction along the lines of the Time Attack competition Mr Mizuguchi mentions in the interview. There's even some low-resolution versions of the Touring Car rendered artwork you can use as wallpaper on your PC (or Mac, if you have a program such as Decor).

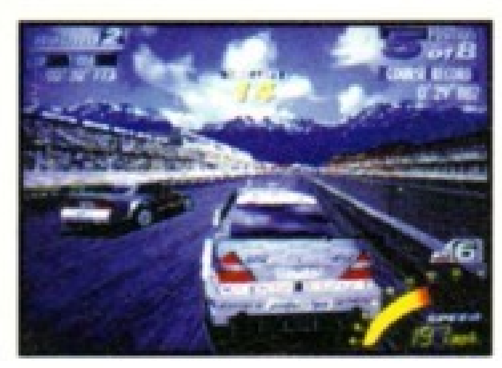




The kind of attention to detail seen in this rendered artwork (above) sets Sega apart from its rivals.

Touring Car is the latest motorsport to come to the arcades courtesy of AM Annex, with further excursions into different types of sports on the cards. News soon.









SPECIAL THE STAR WARS TRILOGY EDITION

THE ART OF STAR WARS

Twenty year ago a motion picture event occurred that would forever change the way movies are made. Star Wars not only revolutionised the art of film making but also influenced the lives of millions. With LucasFilm preparing to release Special Editions of the Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE once again journeys to that galaxy far, far away...





WHEN STAR WARS FIRST BLASTED ITS way onto cinema screens in early 1977, few could have predicted just how enduring or phenomenal George Lucas' visionary space opera would be. Indeed even Lucas himself was skeptical that his years of hard work, studio confrontations and financial hassles would pay off at all.

Fortunately for him (and us) Star Wars became an unprecedented success, spawning two sequels and, thanks to some foresight on Lucas' part, a wealth of cash-generating merchandise. Now, twenty years on, LucasFilm are rereleasing the Star Wars trilogy as celebratory Special Editions containing all-new footage, computer generated visual effects and a digitally remastered soundtrack. Fans of the original films will get the opportunity to see their favourite flicks as they've never seen them before and a new generation of movie goers will be able to experience the Trilogy as it was meant to be seen.

MAKING MOVIES

In 1993, with the twentieth anniversary of Star Wars a mere four years away, George Lucas decided to begin work on restoring and rereleasing his classic sci-fi Trilogy. The original idea was simply to release the movies at two week intervals so audiences familiar with the video versions of the films would be able to see them on the big screen once again. However, there were many visual effects that Lucas was unhappy with and scenes that had been shot in 1976 but removed before the final cut was assembled. Turning to the visual effects house that he himself had formed in the early Seventies, Lucas set Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) the task of restoring his masterpiece to its former glory as well as bring the series bang up to date with state-of-the-art special effects.

The challenge was not only to seamlessly blend twenty year old footage with previously unseen digital creations but also to fully realise Lucas' original vision. Likewise the Trilogy would now also benefit from a full THX digital soundtrack. "This was my ulterior motive," says Lucas of his decision to bring the films up to today's visual and aural standards. "There were various things with which I was never satisfied: special effects shots that were never really finished, and scenes I was unable to include due to a lack of money and time."

INTO THE DIGITAL REALM

The ILM team, under the watchful eye of Producer Rick McCallum and senior Visual Effects Supervisor Dennis Muren, set about producing character and vehicle sketches for inclusion in the Special Editions while the original film itself, locked in a subterranean vault in Kansas, was being restored by a skilled optical team. However, the original negative was in such a poor state that the entire film had to be carefully cleaned frame by frame then digitally scanned before a final print could be made.

Three years of hard but enjoyable work by a team of filmmakers and restorers has yielded the definitive versions of Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi. "I wanted to preserve the Trilogy so that it would continue to be a viable piece of entertainment into the 21st century," Lucas says. Let's take a look at what's new and improved...

SATURN WARS?

So what's all this Star Wars malarkey got to do with Saturn owners then? Well the truth is... not a lot really! Unfortunately for Sega, only Nintendo and Sony currently hold licences to produce Star Wars video games. Sega has no plans at the moment to release any Saturn based Star Wars titles, although there's no reason why a pixel perfect version of the Star Wars Arcade game couldn't be produced.

Past titles have included a Master System and Game Gear version of Star Wars (essentially a conversion of the NES classic), the Mega CD release of LucasArts' hit PC title, Rebel Assault, the dreadful Star Wars Chess (from US developer Software Toolworks), Star Wars Arcade on 32X and a GG version of the SNES game, Super Return of the Jedi. With Shadows of the Empire on N64, Dark Forces on PlayStation and more PC titles in the pipeline (Rebellion, X-wing Vs TIE Fighter), perhaps it's about time Sega took the world of video games back... by Force!





The 32X version of Star Wars Arcade featured the infamous Death Star trench run. Super Return of the Jedi (above) on GG.





Star Wars
(Released March 21)

The majority of ILM's work can be seen in Star Wars. Unleashed across the UK on March 21, the digitally remastered rerelease is not only an attempt to present Lucas' magnum opus as he originally intended it to be seen but also acts as a showcase for some of the groundbreaking visual effects techniques due to be utilised in the forthcoming Star Wars prequel trilogy. All in all there are roughly four and a half minutes of extra footage for fans to ogle over, consisting of both new CG (Computer Generated) footage and previously unseen material. In 1976 Lucas shot a scene where Jabba the Hutt decides to pay a surprise visit on Han Solo at Docking Bay 94.

In the original scene Jabba was portrayed by Declan Mulholland, although Lucas intended to remove the portly actor with a stop motion creation. When time and money ran out the scene was dropped. With the advent of digital technology ILM has been able to reinsert this scene and seamlessly blend footage of a young Harrison Ford interacting with a CG Jabba. The Han/Jabba relationship was important to Lucas and including it in the Special Edition release was a major achievement. "I really wanted to put that back in there," he explains, "because it was relevant to what happens to Han at the end of the movie and in The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi. I wanted to be able to connect the first film with the next two, the way it was meant to be." You'll also recognise the feared bounty hunter Boba Fett hovering near the obese gangster acting as a bodyguard and silent witness to Han's smooth bargaining skills.

Audiences also need to keep a watchful eye when Luke's Landspeeder makes its entrance into Mos Eisley as ILM has added scurrying womp rats, loading droids, Rontos (huge, lumbering beasts based on the CG brontosaurus models used in Jurassic Park) and increased the activity in the now thriving spaceport. Sharp-eyed fans will even be able to spot Dash Rendar's Outrider (the stock light freighter he uses in the N64 Shadows of the Empire game) as it blasts into the sky. In the final Death Star battle, all motion controlled models have been replaced with CG craft capable of performing previously impossible zero G manoeuvres.



The Empire Strikes Back
(Released April 11)

Although LucasFilm is still keeping quiet regarding the changes that have been made to Empire, the movie has still received a significant visual makeover with new CG footage of Cloud City and more shots of Luke's encounter with the vicious Wampa in its icy lair. In the original sequence, a battered Luke hangs from the ceiling of a frozen cave before he frees himself in time to face the razor sharp claws of Hoth's premier carnivore. ILM recently re-shot the scene (using a costumed actor) giving the audience more insight into the savagery of this lumbering beast. The legendary Snowspeeder battle has also been cleaned up with visible matte lines removed and niggling mistakes corrected. The Falcon's approach to Cloud City has been beefed up with CG shots following the ship as it weaves its way through towers and city blocks. In a controversial move, ILM has replaced many of conceptual artist Ralph McQuarrie's glorious matte paintings with rendered backgrounds. Many of the live-action Cloud City corridor scenes now feature huge windows providing a tantalising glimpse of Bespin's cloud sky below. Regardless of what you may have read elsewhere, Yoda will NOT be a CG creation.









Return of the Jedi
(Released April 25)

As with Empire, the final part of the Star Wars saga remains virtually intact with only minor CG additions enhancing what some have labelled the weakest film of the Trilogy. Certainly Lucas' idea of a primitive lifeform (Ewoks) defeating a technologically superior enemy (The Empire) may have sounded appealing at the time but the majority of Star Wars fans still cringe at the sight of the furry little buggers. Resisting the urge to digitally erase the Ewoks, ILM has instead opted to improve the Jabba courtroom scene by adding CG characters and live action footage to spruce up the previously sparse dance number. LucasFilm managed to track down the actress who played the Twi'lek dancing girl, Oola, and enhanced her performance with the aid of extra band members and CG singers (including a fully realised Sy Snootles). The music is now more "bluesy" with the Max Rebo band now boasting enough members to form its own football team. ILM has also enhanced the Sarlacc pit, the gaping maw located in the Dune Sea which Jabba informs our heroes "slowly digests its victims over a thousand years." The pit now features a 'snapping' beak and CG tentacles that reach out to grab its prey. However, it's Jedi's final sequence which appears to have received the most work as Lucas requested that the minimal Ewok celebration be altered. Fans can now look forward to digital shots showing celebrations on not just Endor but also Tatooine, Bespin and the Imperial city of Coruscant. This marks the first celluloid appearance of Coruscant and Lucas has already stated that this location will feature heavily in the forthcoming prequel trilogy.





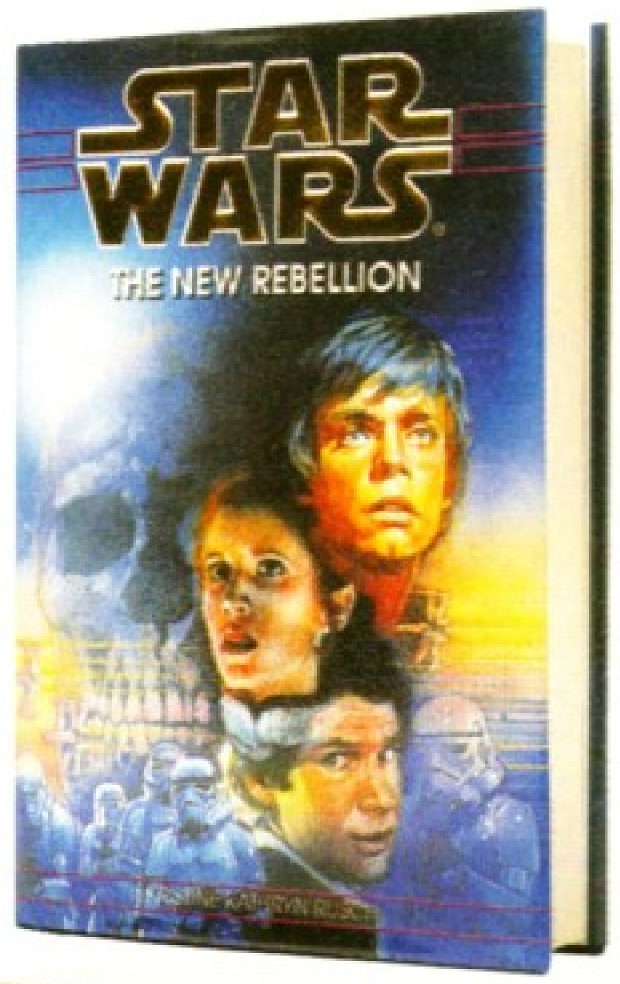
MAY THE £ORCE BE WITH YOU!

The original Star Wars Trilogy has grossed an estimated £200 million worldwide making them the most financially successful movies ever. However, it's merchandising that has been the real bread winner for George Lucas. Over the past twenty years a literal mountain of Star Wars merchandise has been produced ranging from action figures and model kits to bed sheets and CD soundtracks. This spread represents a selection of some of the finer items currently available in shops with the promise of more expensive items over the coming months (would you pay $4000 for a life size Stormtrooper?). Note: Prices may vary from store to store.



Action Fleet A-Wing
Price: £11.99





Star Wars Novels
Price: From £4.99-£12.99



Kenner TIE Fighter
Price: £12.99



Kenner Deluxe Figures
Price: £9.99



Micro Machines Mini Heads
Price: £5.99



Micro Machines Royal Guard Playset
Price: £9.99



Micro Machines Epic Collection
Price: £7.99



Action Fleet Battle Packs
Price: £6.99



Kenner Star Wars figures
Price: £4.25

Thanks to Toy Options for supplying the Action Fleet vehicles, Battle Packs, Playsets, Mini Heads and Vehicle Collections. Kenner toys supplied by Hasbro Toys. Star Wars Chronicles book supplied by Virgin Publishing Ltd.



Kenner X-wing Fighter
Price: £18.99



Micro Machines Vehicle Collections
Price: £4.99

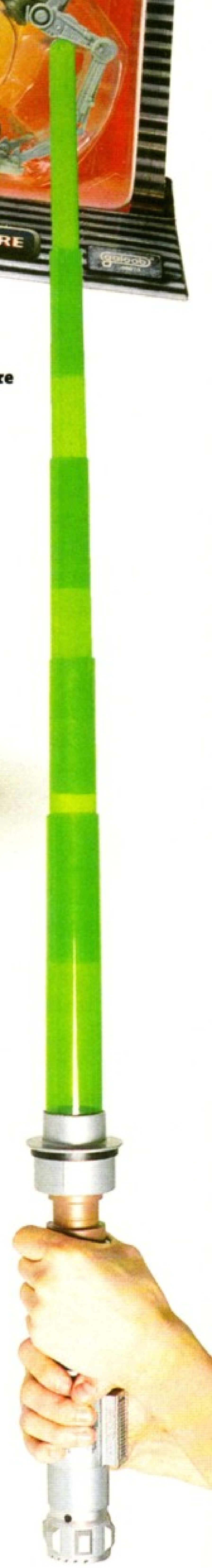


Action Fleet Battle Packs
Price: £6.99





Action Fleet Slave 1
Price: £11.99



Kenner Light Sabre
Price: £21.99



Action Fleet Snowspeeder
Price: £11.99



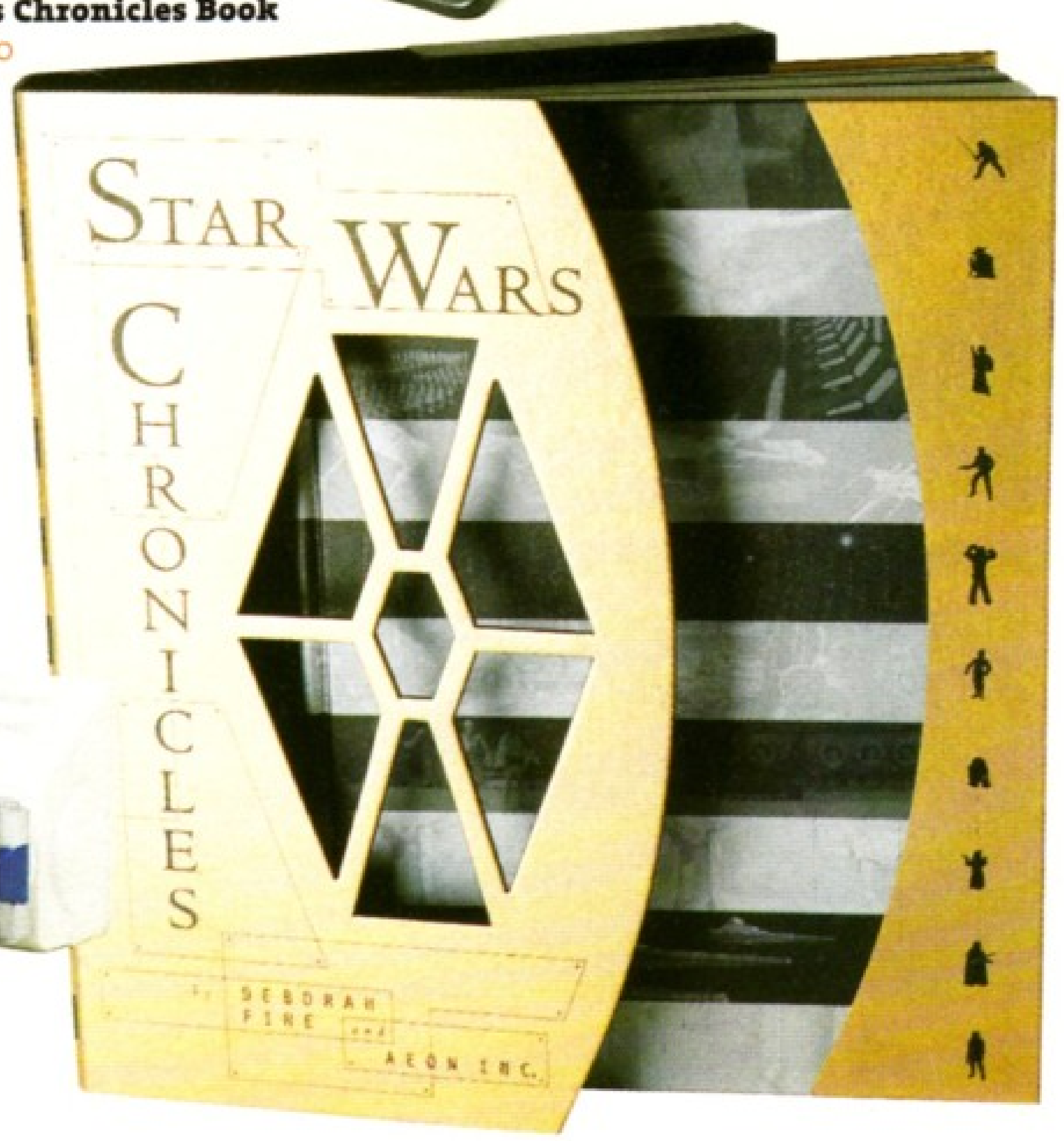
Kenner Action Figure
Price: £4.25



Micro Machines TIE Fighter Pilot Playset
Price: £9.99



Micro Machines R2-D2 Playset
Price: £9.99



Star Wars Chronicles Book
Price: £100

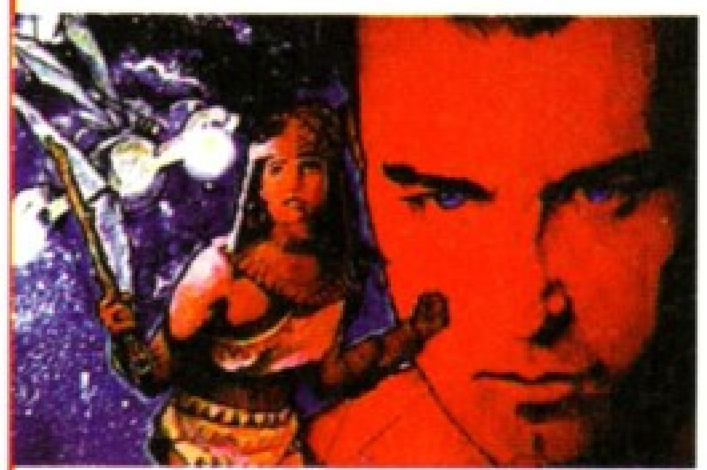
FEATURE

STAR WARS TIMELINE

Over the past few years LucasFilm has attempted to form a cohesive continuity for its Star Wars universe, with all events contained within a set time frame. Although the original Star Wars movies were actually only set over four years, George Lucas' creation has since spawned a mountain of comic books and novels further enriching the timeless struggle of good versus evil.

- Dark Horse Comic
- Movie
- Novel

5000 years Before Star Wars – The Golden of the Age of the Sith

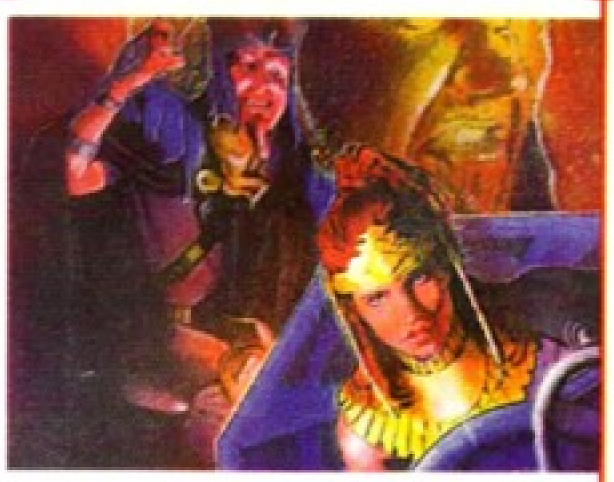


4000 BSW – Ulic Qel-Droma & The Beast Wars of Onderon

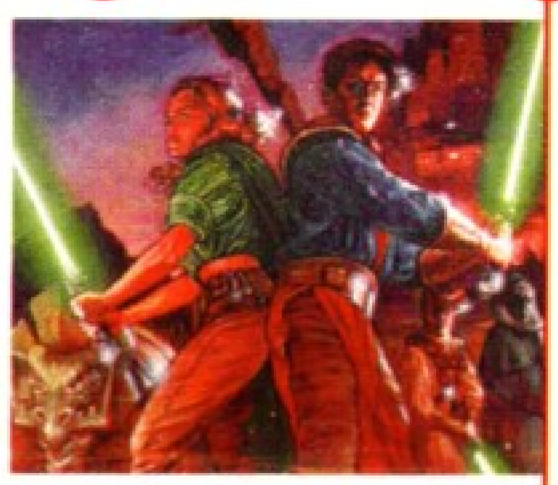


3998 BSW – The Freedon Nadd Uprising





4990 BSW – The Fall of the Sith Empire



3999 BSW – The Saga of Nomi Sunrider



3992 BSW – Dark Lords of the Sith



3990 BSW – The Sith War

SHOOTING STARS

The 1989 release of Timothy Zahn's Heir to the Empire novel was really the catalyst that renewed interest in the Star Wars saga. Since then there has been a steady stream of novels, comics and literature adding to the established Star Wars saga. Did you know that Han and Leia are now married with three kids or that the Emperor never really died at the Battle of Endor? Thought not. Here's a quick look what at who's who and what you should know...

Luke Skywalker

Now a fully fledged Jedi Master, Luke has begun taking steps to reestablish the Jedi Knights hunted and killed during the reign of Emperor Palpatine. Establishing an academy on the fourth moon of Yavin (used as a Rebel base in Star Wars) Luke has faced many challenges including rogue students, loss of his Force-based abilities and the resurrection of the Emperor himself. His time is spent between finding and training new Jedi and teaching Leia and her children how to use their newfound talents.

Han Solo

Still a scoundrel after all these years, Han Solo is now Princess Leia's husband and father to their three children: Jacen, Jaina and Anakin. Captain of the Millennium Falcon (co-piloted by his faithful Wookie companion Chewbacca) Solo often yearns for his carefree younger days but has certainly had his fare share of adventure over the past few years facing the remnants of the Empire and even returning to his homeworld of Corellia to face his own identical twin.

Princess Leia

Head of state and leader of the New Republic, Leia still resembles the feisty young women who risked all for the Rebellion. Now mother to three young Jedi and coping with her own Force powers, she constantly battles against overwhelming odds to maintain the freedom and peace she helped bring to the galaxy. Leia has coped with being both a political and assassins target over the years although the kidnapping of her children has recently made her take a backseat in the New Republic's affairs.

Boba Fett

A constant thorn in Han Solo's side, the most feared Bounty Hunter in the galaxy actually survived being digested by the Sarlacc pit in Return of the Jedi. As the only person to ever outwit him, Fett burns with vengeance for Solo and has attempted to capture or kill the Corellian on many occasions. Clad in weapon-covered Mandalorian battle armour, Boba Fett knows that he and Solo are fated to meet again...

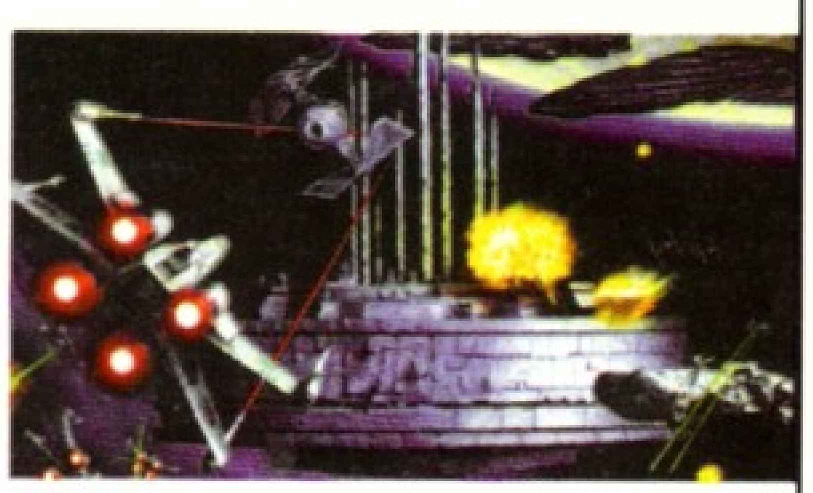
4 ASW – Return of the Jedi (Episode VI)



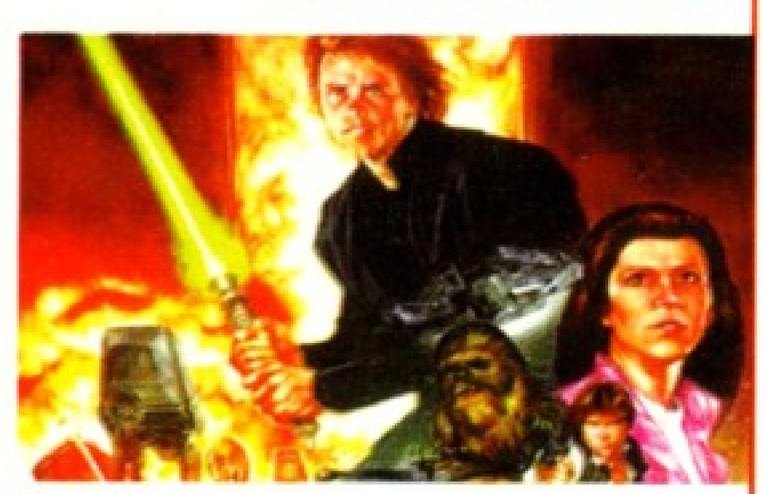
4+ ASW – Classic Star Wars: The Vandelhelm Mission

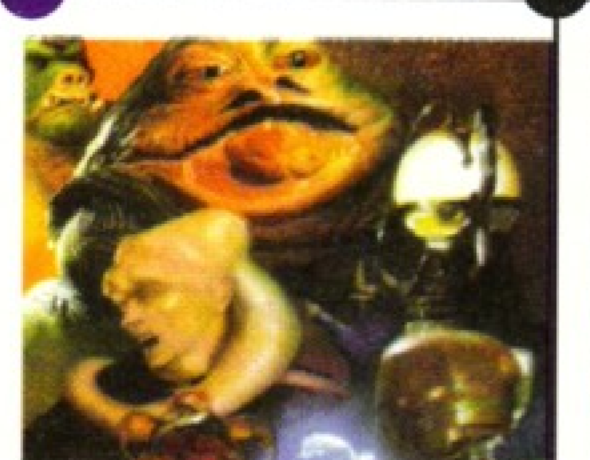


7 ASW – X-wing Rogue Squadron, Wedge's Gamble, The Krytos Trap, The Bacta War

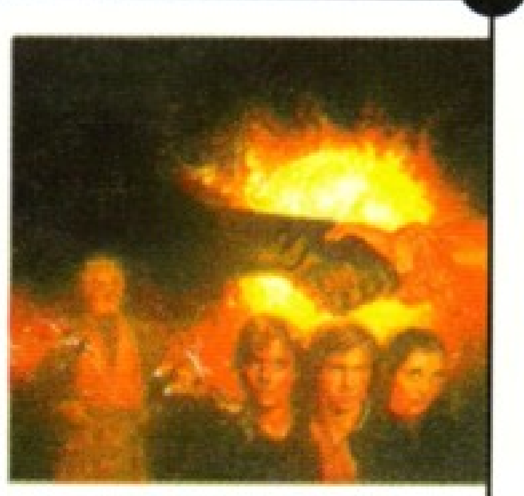


10 ASW – Dark Empire

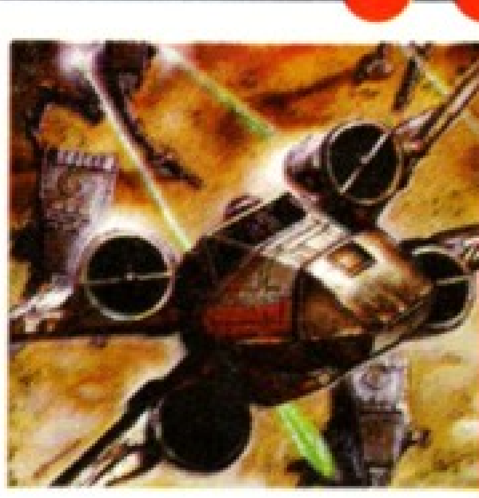




Tales from Jabba's Palace



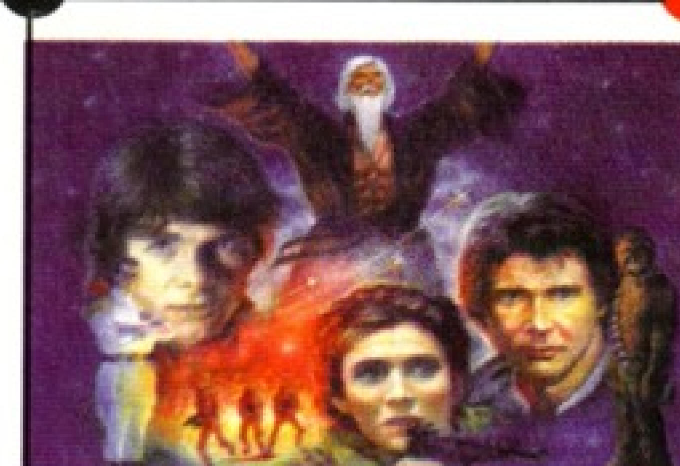
The Truce at Bakura



4+ ASW – X-wing Rogue Squadron



8 ASW – The Courtship of Princess Leia



9+ ASW – Heir to the Empire, Dark Force Rising, The Last Command

5-10 BSW – Droids



Tales from the Mos Eisley Cantina



Splinter of the Mind's Eye



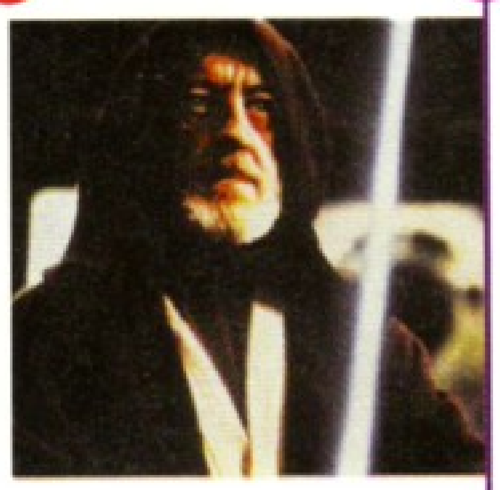
River of Chaos



3 ASW – The Empire Strikes Back (Episode V)



CARRIES ON BOTTOM LEFT



Star Wars: A New Hope (Episode IV)



Classic Star Wars: The Early Adventures



0-3 years After Star Wars – Classic Star Wars



Tales of the Bounty Hunters



3+ ASW Shadows of the Empire

The Emperor

Wait a second... the Emperor? Yep, the evil Palpatine survived his apparent demise on board the Death Star II by projecting his lifeforce across the galaxy and into a new clone body. Returning from beyond the grave, Palpatine dealt many a crushing blow to the recently established New Republic until his final defeat at the hands of Luke Skywalker. Whilst attempting to posses the body of Leia's son, Anakin, The Emperor was driven from this plane forever and the galaxy was free once more.

Grand Admiral Thrawn

Introduced in Timothy Zahn's novels, Thrawn was responsible for temporarily reuniting the Empire's shattered forces and, using his natural leadership and strategy skills, nearly managed to bring the New Republic to its knees. With the aid of the insane Jedi Master, Jorus C'Boath, the blue-skinned Thrawn used cloned Stormtroopers and a fleet of lost starships to bring the galaxy under his rule. However, his own lies and an unshakeable belief in his abilities proved to be his undoing.

Jorus C'Boath

When Thrawn began his campaign of terror, he enlisted the abilities of Jorus C'Boath, a Jedi Master once thought long dead. It was soon revealed that C'Boath was in fact an imperfect clone and his mental health and Dark Side Force abilities soon drew him into conflict with Luke Skywalker. On the distant planet of Wayland, C'Boath fought a bloody battle against Luke but was eventually killed by swift actions of Mara Jade.

Mara Jade

Unknown to all but a handful, Mara Jade was in actuality the Emperor's Hand, a highly skilled operative charged with undertaking missions deemed too dangerous for conventional Imperial forces. Mara was at Jabba's palace when Luke arrived but failed to kill him. After the fall of the Empire she spent years hearing Palpatine's voice commanding her to kill Skywalker. In a light sabre battle with an evil clone of Luke, Mara was finally freed of her burden.

Jacen & Jaina Solo

Twins born to Princess Leia Organ Solo and Han Solo, Jacen and Jaina have inherited the Force from both their mother and Uncle Luke. Although still in their formative years, both children have had adventures of their own and often get into more trouble than they can handle. Another child, Anakin, has recently been born.

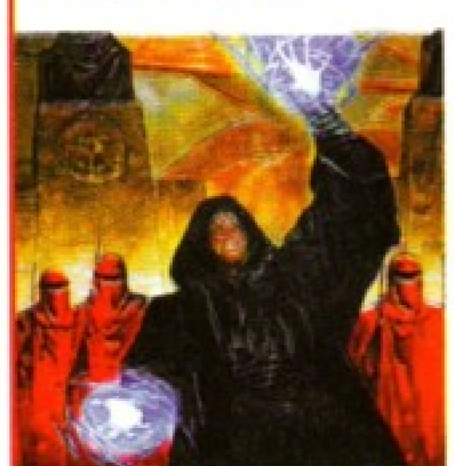
Admiral Daala

Charged by Grand Moff Tarkin himself with overseeing the development of the Death Star, Daala spent years at a hidden Imperial weapons research centre called Maw Cluster. Unaware that the Empire had fallen she has recently struck at the New Republic time and time again. Her last mission saw her allied with Thrawn's former First Officer, Captain Pellaeon.

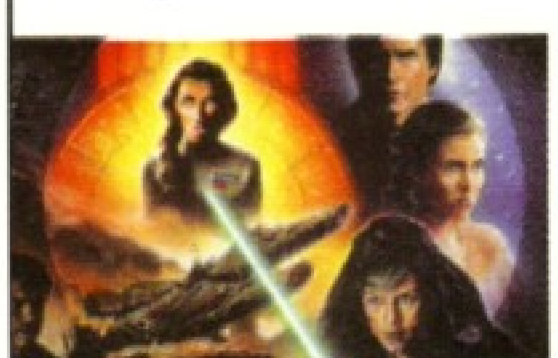
10+ ASW – Dark Empire II



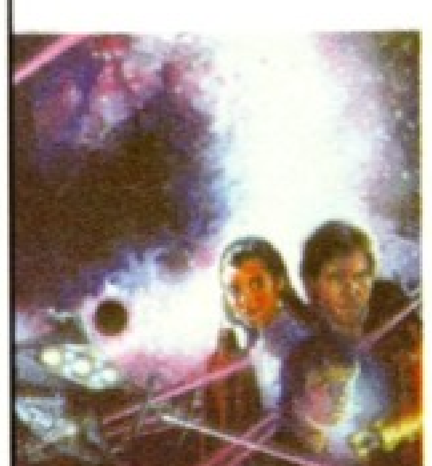
11 ASW – Empire's End



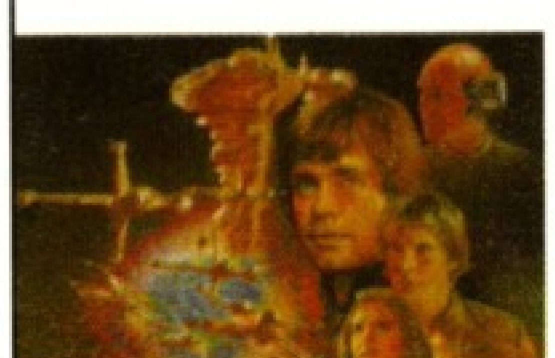
11+ ASW – The Jedi Academy Trilogy: Jedi Search, Dark Apprentice, Champions of the Force



12+ ASW – Darksaber

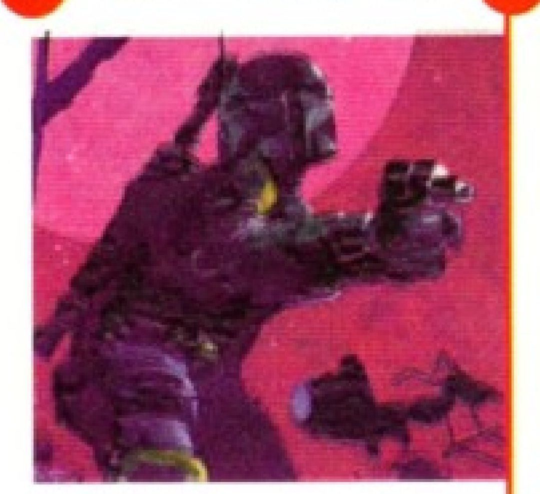


16 ASW – The Black Fleet Crisis Trilogy: Before the Storm, Shield of Lies, Tyrant's Test

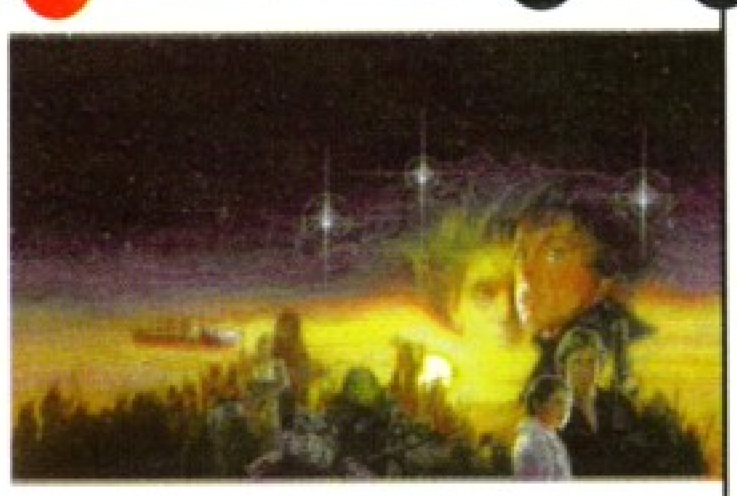


19 ASW – The Hand of Thrawn

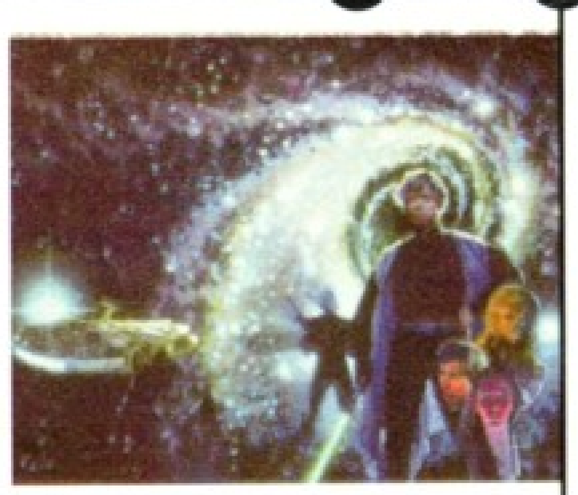




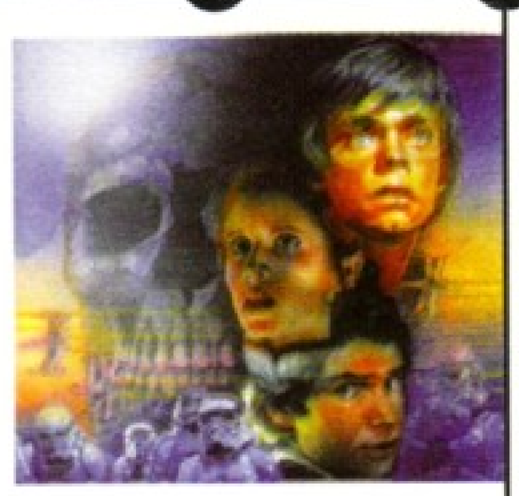
10+ ASW – Boba Fett



12 ASW – Children of the Jedi



14 ASW – The Crystal Star



17 ASW – The New Rebellion



18 ASW – The Corellian Trilogy: Ambush at Corellia, Assault at Selonia, Showdown at Centrepoint

BIG IN JAPAN

What? A new section in SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE? Indeed. It's come to our attention that a great many excellent titles are being released in Japan to universal acclaim, but never getting any kind of European launch. Our aim with Big in Japan is to highlight these games and get them on the shelves of the local Electronic Boutique or whatever NOW!

ELEVATOR ACTION RETURNS

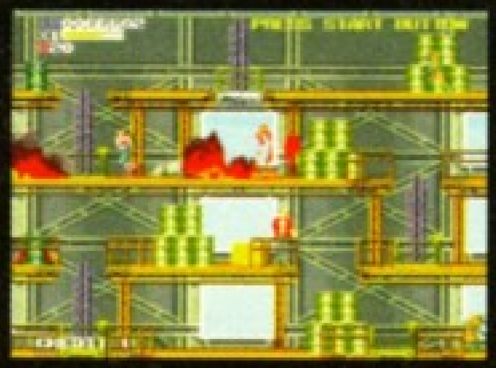
BY	VING/TAITO
STYLE	PLATFORM SHOOTER
ORIGIN	ARCADE UPDATE
RELEASE	SOON, PLEASE!



Elevator Action Returns looks very similar to the JAMMA coin-ops of the early nineties. Graphics were just starting to get smart, and gameplay was still at a premium.

The first game to get the special SSM Big in Japan treatment is a recently released Japanese title from one of the founding fathers of the arcade industry - Taito. Many, many years ago they released an innovative platformer known as Elevator Action which saw players infiltrating various buildings and basically killing people, collecting power-ups and what-have-you. The concept was brilliant - particularly in the form of the eponymous elevators. These moved about the various platform levels all on their own, with players able to jump on the roof and get inside and control where the lift would go.

Not surprisingly, the concept of Elevator Action hasn't really been messed around with in this new Saturn game. A more Nineties style of design is evident though, with a choice of characters, weapons power-ups and some really cool set pieces.







2D EH? URGHHH

You can never get over the power of the Saturn's 2D rendering architecture. When it comes to shifting sprites and backgrounds about, the machine is easily superior to Capcom's CPS-II technology which ran all of their coin-ops up until Street Fighter Alpha II. In many ways, it's superior, with more sprite-rendering capabilities such as expansion and compression.

All of these tricks and more are used in Elevator Action Returns, which really is a glorious use of the Saturn's sprite-based capabilities. The overall look and feel is very close to an early Nineties coin-op, reinforcing the nostalgia feeling still further. But the graphics still look very impressive for a home game...

With a choice of three secret agents each with different capabilities Combined with a range of great power-ups this game is coooool!

VIOLENCE MODE ON/OFF

Elevator Action Returns features the option to include extra violence! This is actually quite comedic in a Mortal Kombat stylee, with blood splats running down the backgrounds, men running about on fire - that kind of thing. The enemy scum are also keen on setting their dogs on you. Of course, they need to be gunned down too, but curiously enough, Taito have not seen fit to include any grizzly deaths for them. They just howl a bit then vanish!





No duff FMV intros here. No sir - instead you get drawn art, just like a coin-op!



Bosses usually take the form of a mini-sprite onslaught! Gun them down like stinking pigs!



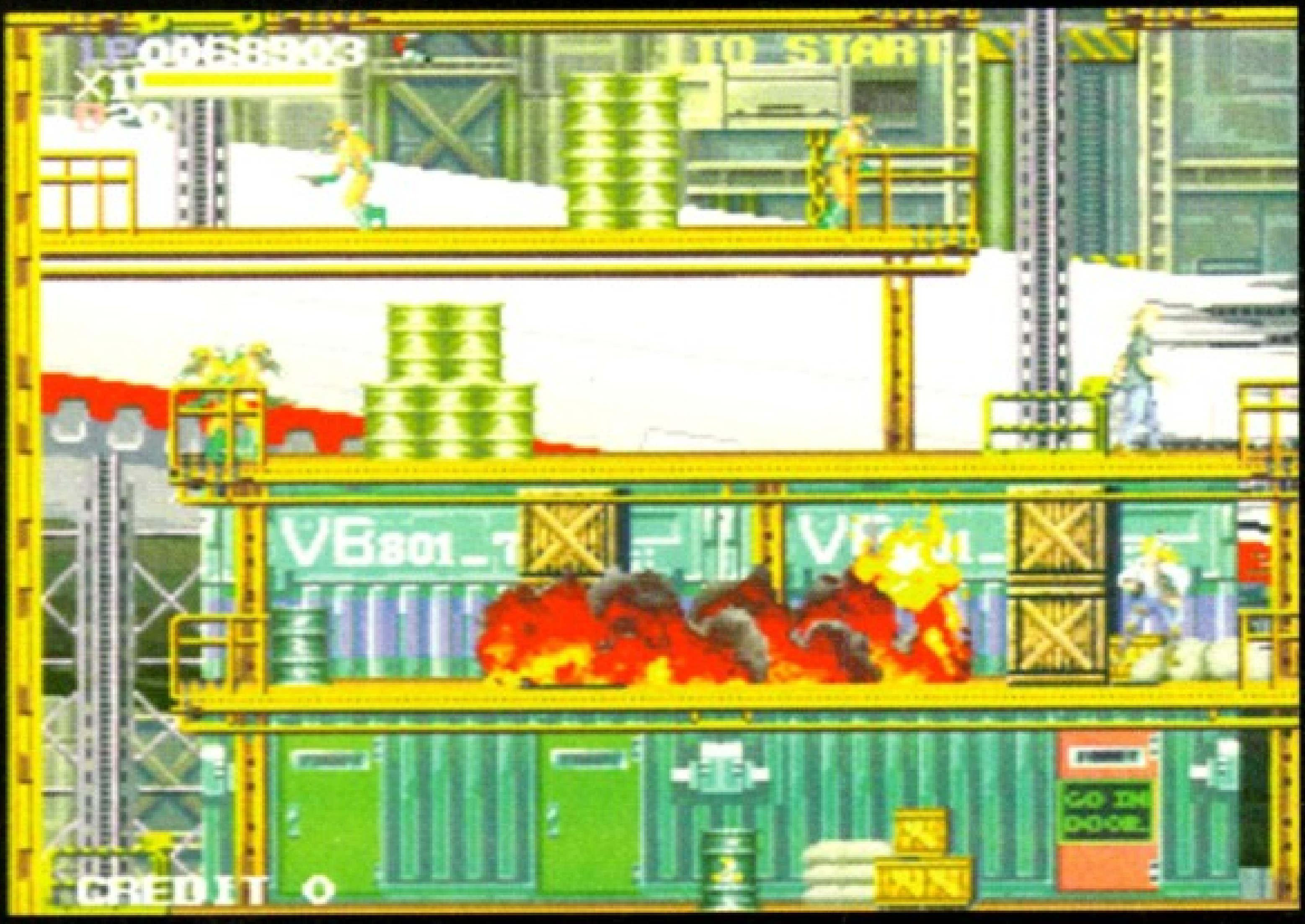


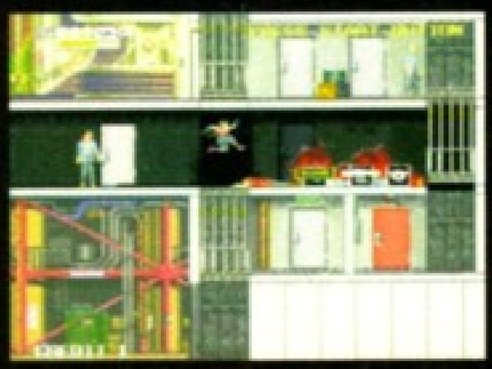
Violence mode adds all manner of amusing effects, such as torched bad guys.

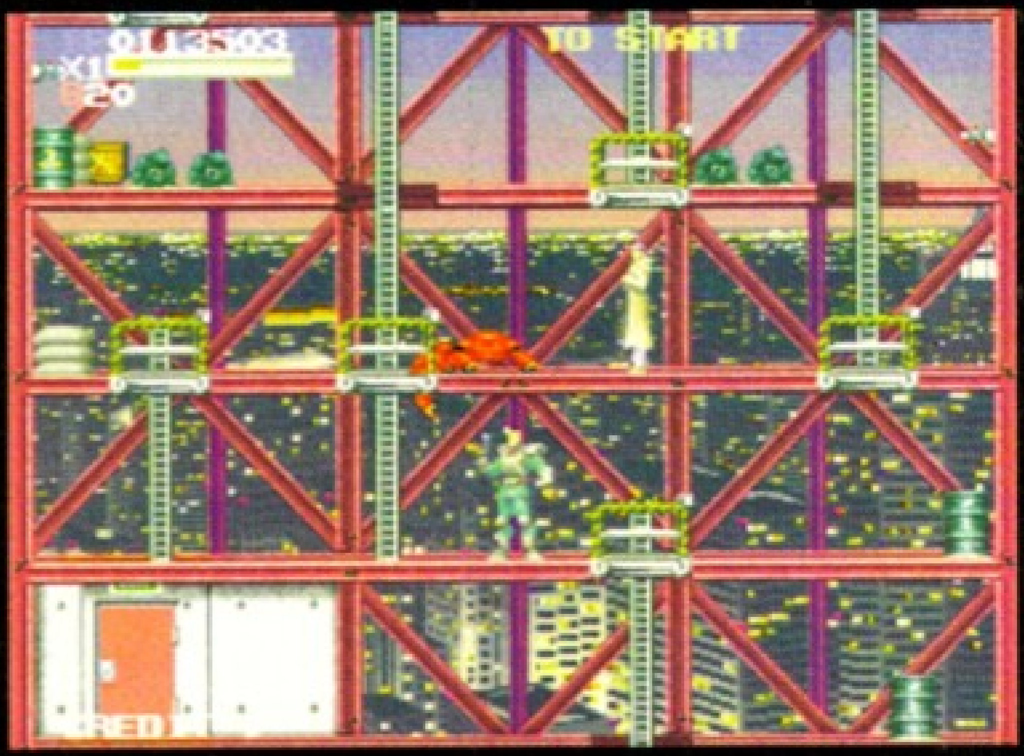


The end of the level is usually greeted with some kind of set-piece. Here the entire building falls down and an enemy chopper appears to taunt you.









Rolling barrels crush enemies. Or shoot them for a big bang.

Combining decent graphics with great gameplay Elevator Action is an import title screaming out for an official release!

WHAT'S THE DEAL?

Levels are split up into various missions in Elevator Action. Typically your task involves locating secret plans or whatever, and these are rather stupidly stashed behind red doors. So, each stage is simply a case of finding the red door, using it, and then getting the hell out of the building. Usually your helicopter turns up to pull you out and drop you into a new situation.

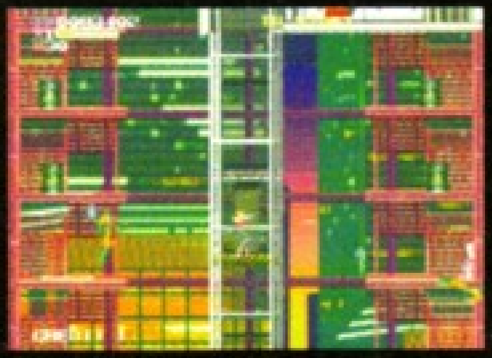
A particularly nice effect occurs at these points. Your chopper drops your off outside of the building, and as you enter, the exterior slowly melts away into a transparency, revealing the interior of the level where the action takes place.

Once inside, it's your against the meanies in your red door pursuits. Helping you out are the blue doors. Hidden behind these are power-ups,

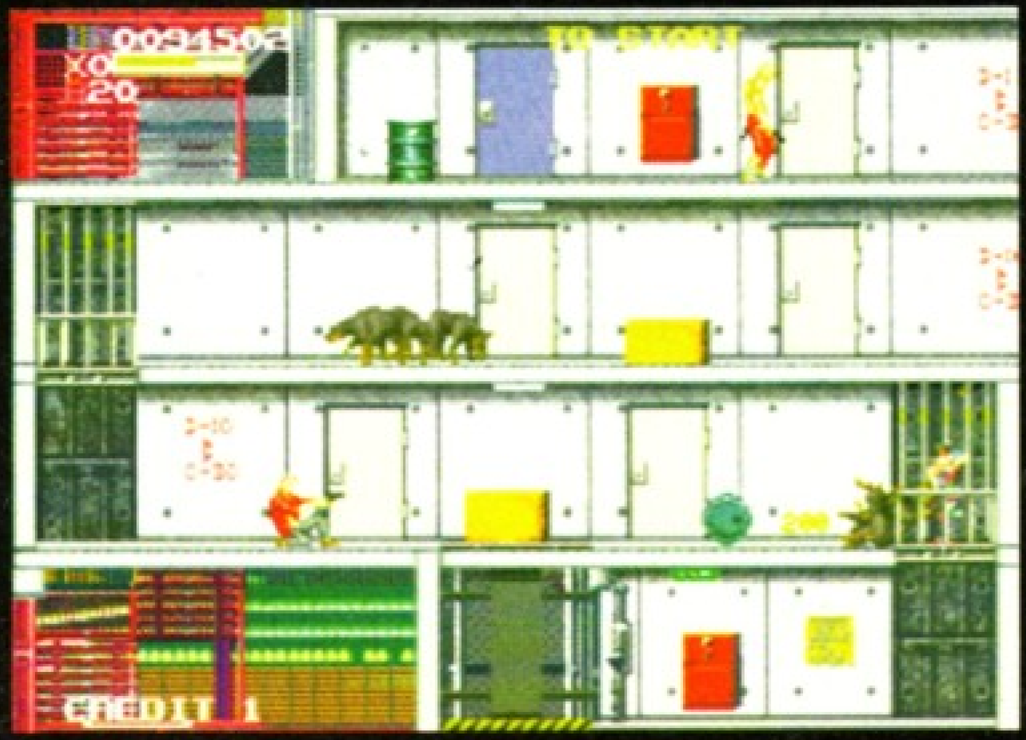


including machine gun autofires and best of all, an enormous rocket launcher!





The rocket launcher produces various flaming effects.



Yes, it's very simple, graphically. But the gameplay is great! That's why Elevator Action should be released in Europe.

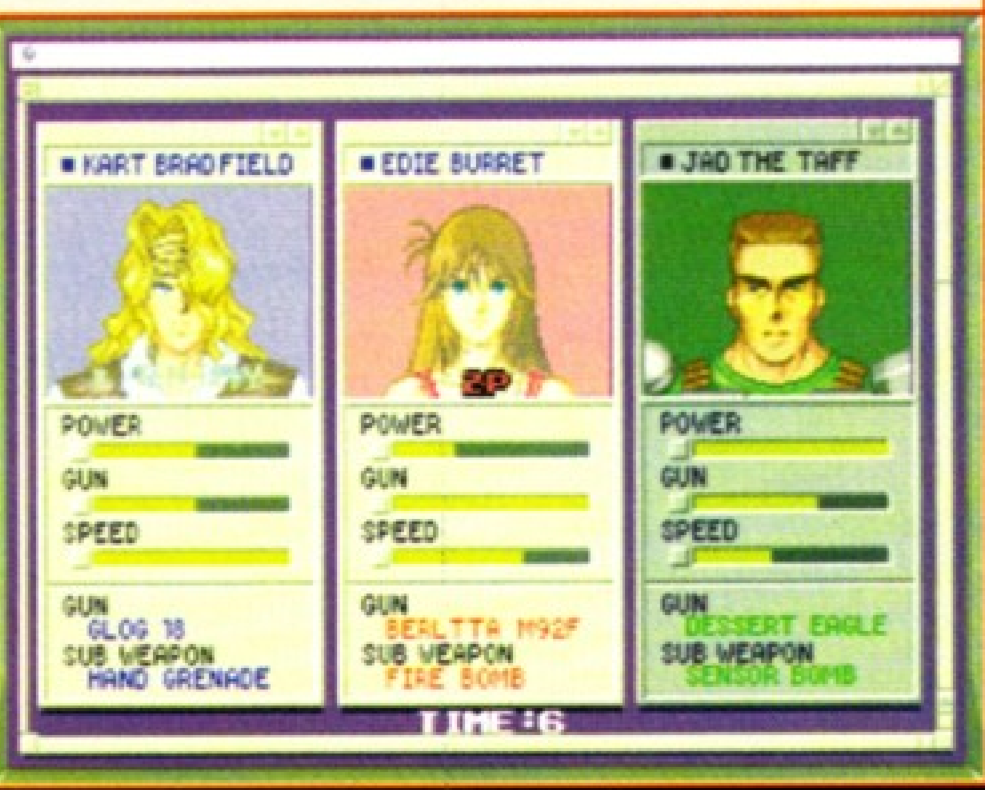
WHY AN OFFICIAL RELEASE?

Very simple with some cool graphics, Elevator Action Returns was an instant hit with the SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE crew when it turned up in our latest package from Japan. Despite a bit of poor animation on the main characters, this game oozes class in terms of gameplay - a commodity often lost in the rush to produce the best 3D graphics. There's actually a considerable difference between the three characters on offer, and the levels are riddled with little tricks you can exploit - the use of rolling oil barrels in particular to start fire or take out bad guys stands out. And the elevators themselves add a refreshing slant to the gameplay. There's also simultaneous two-player action as well, clearly the icing on a very substantial cake indeed.

For those reasons, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE beseeches the powers that be to license Elevator Action Returns immediately. Released at £29.99 this could become something of a sleeper hit, so appeals all-round to whoever licenses games: bring Elevator Action Returns to Europe! You won't regret it - it's flippin' awesome!

CHARACTER STUDIES

Three different agents can be chosen to take on the Elevator Action Returns missions. The female agent, Edie Burret, is clearly a good bet to go for. Although lacking a tad in power, she's relatively fast and packs a Beretta M92F - the most powerful gun in the game. Two men are on offer, the first being Kart Bradfield, a very athletic somersaulting type, who's stronger than the girl, more agile, but packing a considerably less powerful Gloc-18. The final character is the slowest but the most entertaining - Jad the Taff! A veritable giant of a man, he kills men just by charging through them. His Desert Eagle is the second most powerful gun in the game. All characters have two different styles of attack. At long range they use their guns on their opponents. Close-in they favour smacking 'em over the head with the butts of their guns!



REVIEW

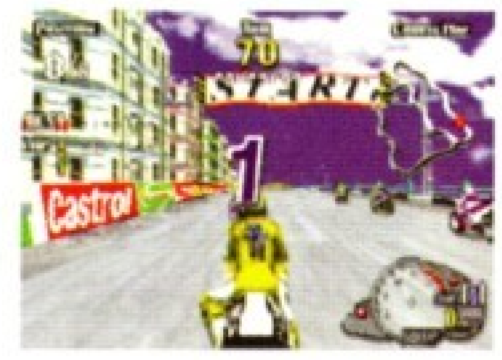
MANX TT SUPERBIKE

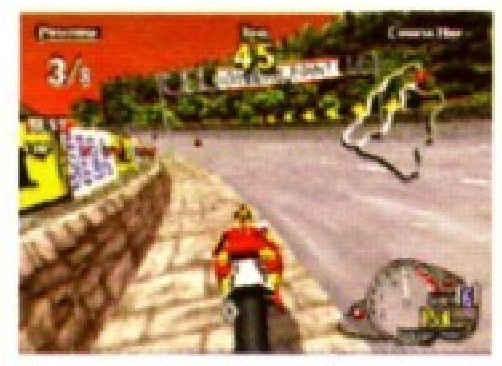
The range of amazing Sega arcade conversions continues apace with the release of Manx TT Superbike, the pseudo-sequel to the the brilliant Sega Rally Championship! But can it surpass the wonders of Rally?

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	MOTORBIKE RACING
RELEASE	MARCH 20

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 91%









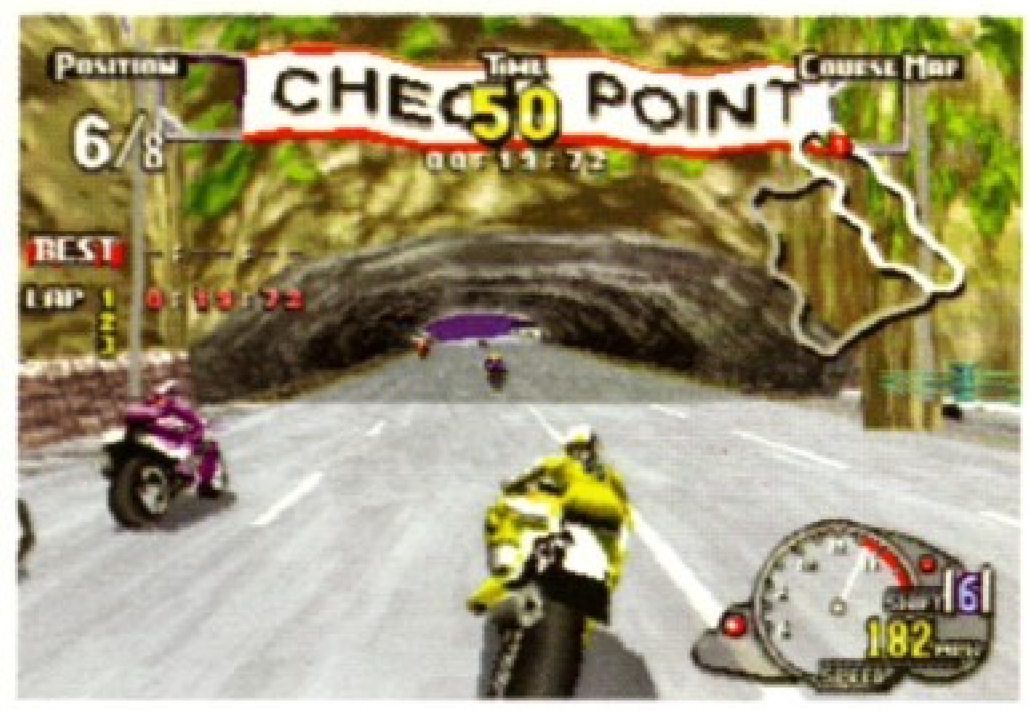
Visually the long thing that lets Manx down are a few glitches here and there and noticeable PAL borders.



The good news is that the speed of the arcade game has been successfully transferred across from Model 2 to Saturn.

Although there have been doubts about the quality of the Saturn Manx TT conversion, potentially the game's biggest problem was known before the conversion work even begun! The question of lastability has been floating around for months now... after all, arcade Manx TT has only the two different racing courses, as opposed to Daytona's three and Rally's four. Just how can Sega make a two-track game a truly lastable videogame worth forty five quid? Well, I'll come to that later.

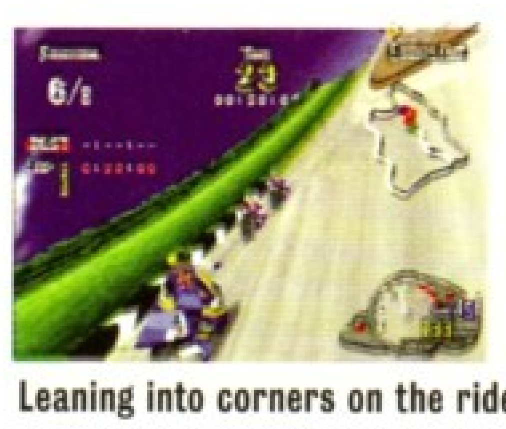
First of all, we'll deal with the nitty gritty. In terms of appearance and movement, I very much doubt that any one is going to have many complaints with Manx TT Superbike. There's a lowering of resolution and frame rate from the arcade version, but the overall look is approximate to Sega Rally's quality. The fluidity of the update is most impressive, running rock solid at 30 frames per second no matter what is on-screen. What is impressive is the sheer amount of 3D pokery going down on-screen. The TT course in particular is a triumph of design, successfully transplanting across just about every piece of detail from the arcade original across onto the Saturn, bar a few zebra crossings. The beginner's Laxey course also has its moments, but even the arcade version was lacking in detail compared to the tracks in Rally and Daytona.

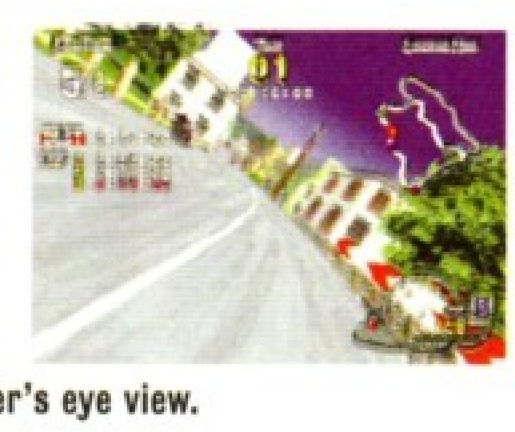


All of the gripes we had with Daytona CCE in terms of fluidity, detail and pop-up are put to rest with this



In Reverse Mirror mode you get different skies!

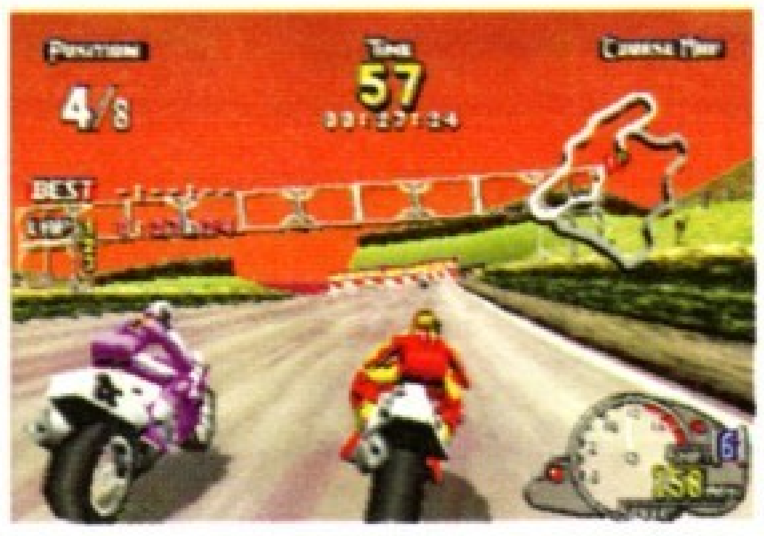




Leaning into corners on the rider's eye view.



The notorious S-bend at the end of the TT course requires precision riding.



Red signs = dangerous turn.



Speeding past the Isle of Man scenery on the TT track.



The bikes take to the air on the first (and only) hump on the beginners' Laxey course.





The presentation is fairly basic, certainly not in the same league as Sega Rally and Daytona CCE.



Uphill sections of the track can slow you up pretty badly.



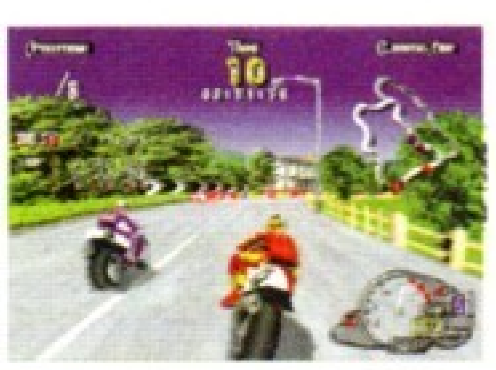
Although missing some detail, the tracks are pretty close.

The speed and the look of the excellent Model 2 coin-op have transferred across to Saturn surprisingly well indeed

Manx TT conversion. I'm not going to say that the pop-up is completely eliminated, but it is much improved over the antics in DCCE, which can only be good news.

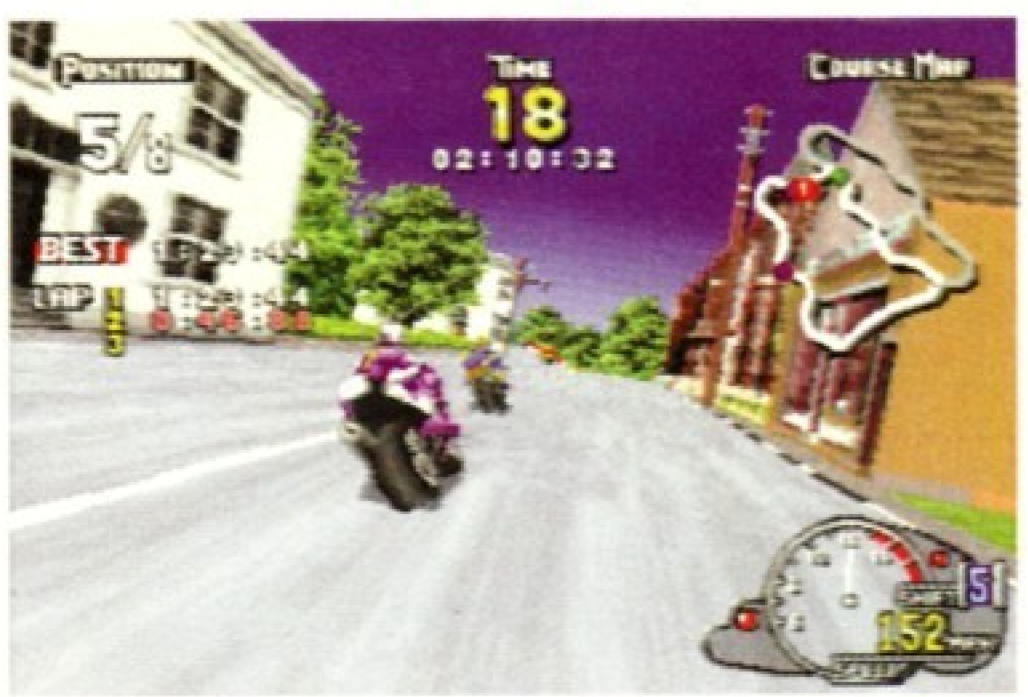
The graphics, although impressive, are not the best bit of the game - no sir! As with Sega Rally before it, it's the quality of the control method that really makes this game so enjoyable to play. At this point I do have to say that a NiGHTS control pad really makes Manx TT that much more precise - the bikes are really flickable, but the response you get from the analogue pad makes it possible to control the extent of your leaning into the various corners, so you can choose for sudden lurches or subtle turns around the more forgiving corners.

So Manx TT really is an enjoyable road racer, but what of the lastability? The bottom line is that there is only two tracks, and the first, the Laxey beginner's track doesn't have any corners that can be described as taxing - it's the opposition (which is pretty tough) that gives this stage any kind of challenge. The TT course is far, far superior - longer than any of the Sega Rally tracks, demanding and exciting. Things are improved with the Reverse Mirror renditions of the tracks. Entirely different driving lines are required to master these





The intelligence of the CPU opposition makes Manx TT a constant battle against other riders - as well as the course.



tracks, so essentially the number of courses is doubled. It would have been nice to see a bit more imagination, such as night riding or wet-weather conditions, failing that a new track (perhaps a guest appearance track from another game), but alas it was not to be.

Just about the only irritating aspects of Manx TT are the music and the presentation. The latter is just dull - way disappointing after the huge amount of selectables in Rally and DCCE. As for the music - arghhh! It's revolting beyond belief, but you can turn it down. It's just a shame that some all-new tracks weren't put together. The sound effects are okay though, although the bassy rumble from the arcade is missed.

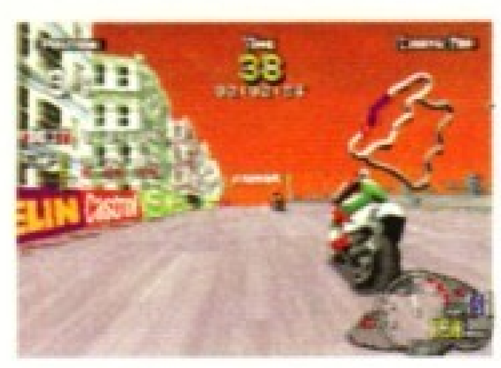
At the end of the day, there's little point denying that Manx TT is a classy videogame. What quibbles you might have about the sound and presentation can't disguise the fact that this is just great fun to play and does a great job of recreating the coin-op.

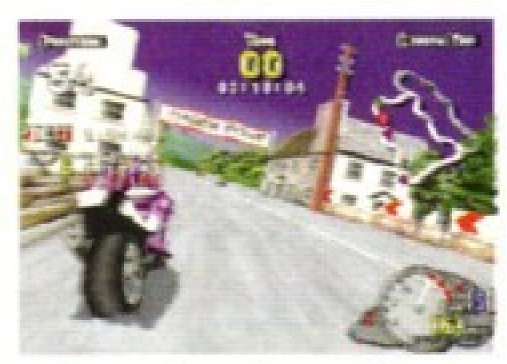
RICH LEADBETTER

RUN DOWN LIKE A STINKING PIG

What is also very good indeed about Manx TT is that the CPU riders are just as vulnerable to the dangers of the course as you are. So unlike the invincible pace opposition of previous racers, it's now possible to see your foes come flying off their bikes... just ready for you to run over them!







Maintaining speed with adept cornering and staying on the racing line is the key to success.

Although lastability could have been improved, Manx TT is a tough, enjoyable experience which does a great job of bringing the arcade game to Saturn.

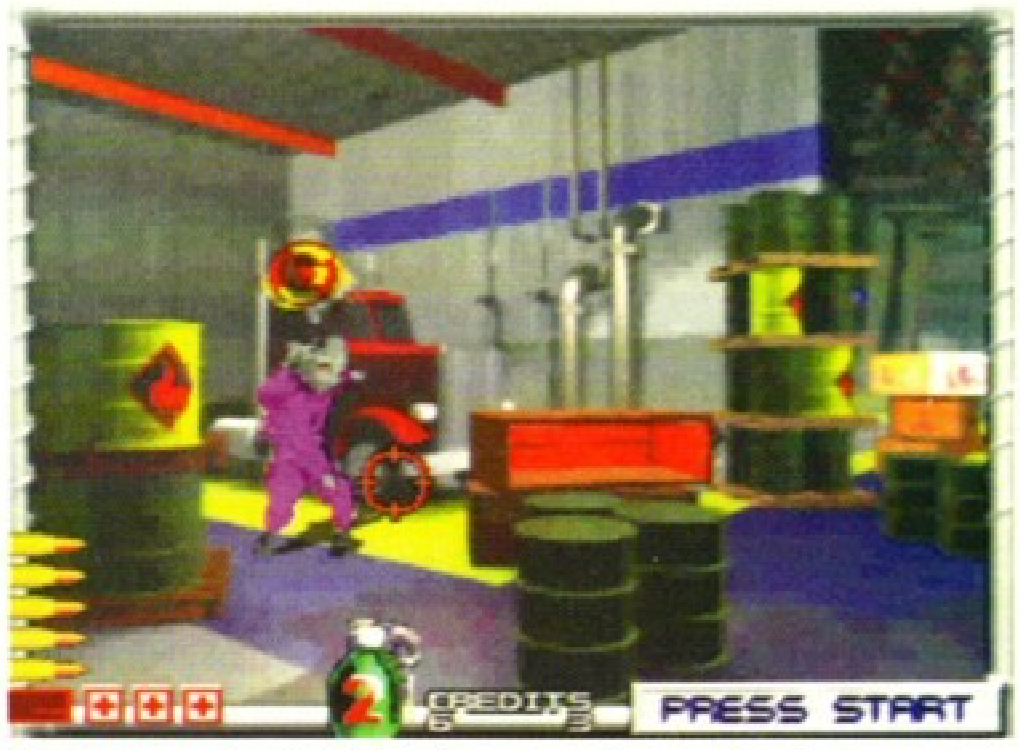
graphics	93
sound	79
playability	93
lastability	90

overall **91%**

AREA 51

Fans of the X-Files, Dark Skies and American Government conspiracy theory related programmes in general rejoice, because GT are about to release the arcade hit Area 51 to enable you to reenact your deviant alien murdering fantasies in the comfort of your own home.

BY	GT INTERACTIVE
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	MARCH



Basically, anything in day-glo colours is a sprite which can be destroyed. So that includes those yellow drums.





That sight on-screen only appears when not using the Virtua Gun. It's actually easier with the joypad, any way.

FENCING PROBLEMS

The graphics of Area 51 are of the FMV variety with sprites overlaid making the game appear very smooth indeed. The trade off has been with the size of the playing screen which has been reduced considerably and with a fence placed around the screen to disguise the obvious borders. You don't get this in the PlayStation version, and to the cynical it's as though you're wandering around Area 51 with wire mesh strapped to your face.



For those people unacquainted with the X-Files, you may well be wondering what the hell Area 51 is. Well it's a secluded place situated in the Nevada desert in America where strange occurrences are afoot. As to what exactly these are nobody can say for sure, but there are basically two theories on the subject. Firstly, that Area 51 is the top secret (despite being well publicised) area which the US government uses for testing their futuristic fighter craft and weaponry. Interesting as this may be, it would make for a pretty dull game, so GT are amongst those who subscribe to the second theory. That being, that the US government has in its possession alien space craft recovered from the scenes of incidents such as Roswell and are test flying them. Not only that but it is claimed they have actual aliens within Area 51, dead and alive. It is this that is the subject matter of GT's latest release, the aptly titled Area 51.

A downed alien space craft has been recovered and taken to the top-secret base where within hours all contact has been lost. Fearing alien world domination, the powers that be decide to send in STAAR, an elite paramilitary unit cleverly disguised as motor mechanics. You are one of these boiler suit clad men. Your mission should you choose to accept it, is to infiltrate the alien ridden base and seek out Area 51's nuclear self-destruct system capable of mass alien annihilation. It's just another ordinary day for these crazy guys.







If you haven't seen it in the arcades, Area 51 is a first-person perspective shoot 'em up in similar vein to Sega's Virtua Cop series. As such, it has the distinction of being the latest in an ever growing number of games to utilise the Virtua

Area 51 is an adequate rendition of the arcade original although the size of the FMV window is a little on the small side...



That bloke is one of your pals. Don't shoot him...



... This bloke definitely! Gun him down like a stinking pig!



Bang. You dead. Or something.









Judging by the colours, these guys must be radioactive...


The stuck-on explosions don't look so good.



Area 51 is packed to the gills with Nick Paterson lookalikes.



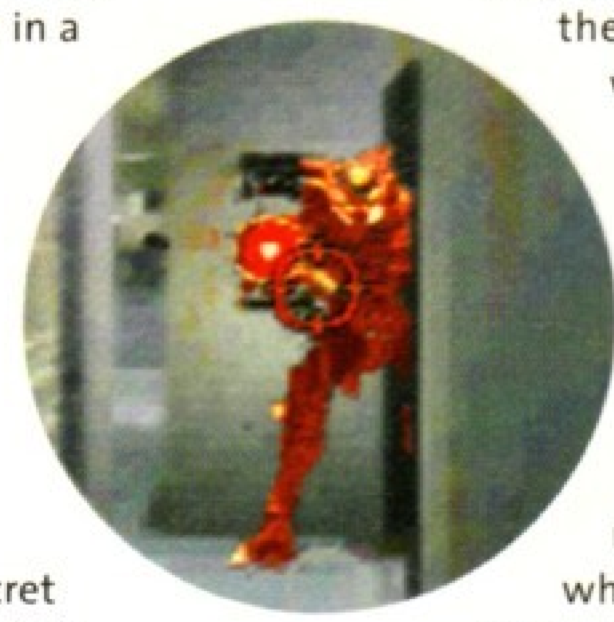
Hmmm. Inside Area 51 and things get tough(er).







Gun. As in most first- person perspective shoot 'em ups, Area 51 has you following a predetermined route inside and around the Area 51 complex. Therein you'll discover hoards of screaming aliens who ought to be gunned down in a violent fashion with points being awarded for each kill. Extra points can be earned by shooting consecutive targets without missing, known as streaks and are essential for racking up a high score. In addition, much of the background scenery is destructible, which when shot reveals secret weapons and power-ups within, not to mention secret rooms. The inclusion of a cowboy mode is most welcome too, whereby those people with two guns can play with them simultaneously. But then I always did that anyway.



As opposed to the rather spectacular polygon fest of the Cop games, Area 51 is quite different in that it's all been done in FMV with the shootable targets being cleverly overlaid sprites as in the arcade version. In fact visually it would appear that Tantalus have done a very good job indeed of recreating the arcade game. The one notable exception to this being the relatively small playing screen featuring some rather large borders which Tantalus have attempted to disguise by sticking a mesh fence to the screen. Admittedly when you first play the game it does quite a good job of fooling you into thinking that it's full screen, but now you've read this the illusion will be shattered and you'll notice straight away. Sorry.

However, graphically Area 51 is a bit on the ropey side with the sprite characters lacking in animation and not blending particularly well with the FMV. The extensive use of full-motion video also gives you the impression that you're watching an extended intro rather than playing a violent shoot 'em up. Although quite tough with plenty of on-screen mayhem ensuing, the game itself remains fairly short and lacking the depth of it's Cop counterpart. Area 51 is the kind of game you can put on for a ten minute blast and enjoy, but as a long term investment it falls short of the mark. With the exception of the Cop games, Area 51 is the best of a bad bunch.



This is the fate that befalls you if you aren't quick enough.

LEE NUTTER

IN THE LINE OF FIRE

As mentioned earlier, you are not alone in your quest to find the self destruct system as you're accompanied by other members of your STAAR team. They tend to get themselves in the line of fire but must not be shot as it results in you losing a life, just like shooting a hostage in the Cop games. Unlike the enemy aliens however, they're not sprite based and are in fact real life actors willing to sacrifice their artistic integrity to earn a little cash.





Ho hum... we think you've got the idea now.

As shoot 'em ups go Area 51 is not a bad effort, but outclassed by the Cop games in every conceivable way.

graphics	70
sound	80
playability	75
lastability	66
overall	72%

INCREDIBLE HULK



Marvel characters gain their superpowers by either a) being bitten by a radioactive animal or b) being exposed to lethal gamma radiation. The Hulk falls into the latter category, but the developers of this game deserve to be subjected to both.

BY	EIDOS
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	WALK 'N' HIT
RELEASE	OUT NOW

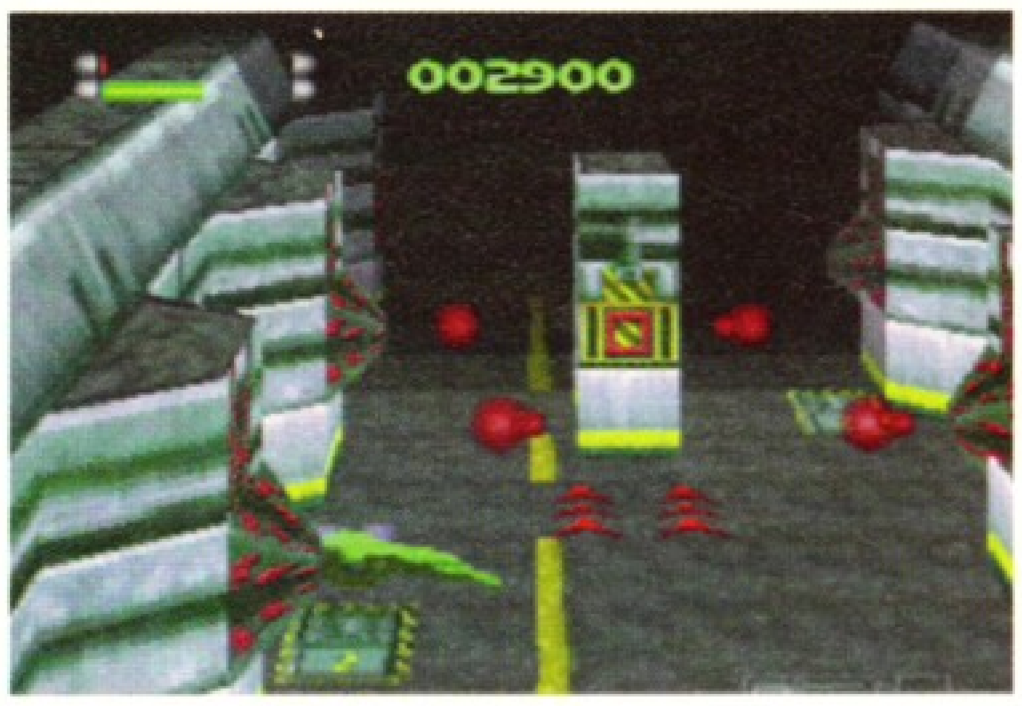




These robots are tougher than the Hulk! D'oh!

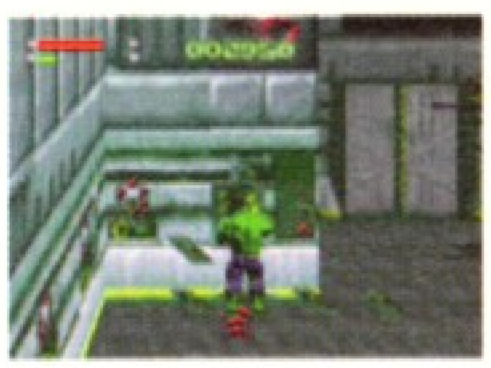






The draw distance on the 3D in Hulk is exceptionally short.





I'm not going to save it for the final comment, I'm going to tell you right now that The Incredible Hulk by Eidos Interactive is without a doubt the worst Saturn game I've ever had the misfortune to play ever. Ever. And I had to review Doom. I'll go into just why it's so bad later on, but for now here's a cursory glance at the plot. The Hulk blah blah captured yadda yadda Pantheon rhubarb blah taken to secret hide away yadda yadda yadda bad guys crash into their own base blah rhubarb blah Hulk escapes yadda yadda fight his way out. It's just as well you weren't expecting an epic, sweeping cross-over type storyline in which, after much agony and introspection, Banner finally comes to terms with his irreversible condition and then gets angry and smashes the place up.

By now you will have glanced at the final scores and concluded that I enjoyed playing the Hulk about as much as I would relish the prospect of gargling napalm. But just how was it possible for developers Attention to Detail (snigger) to come up with such a stinker? Well let's take a look...

1) To start with, the whole game concept stinks. It's a Loaded style 3D exploration game, in which the Hulk has to find switches and whatnot to open doors and activate lifts. This would be fine if it was some other character, but the Hulk is the Hulk for gawd's sake. Why can't he just smash through doors and climb up lift shafts? Because then there would be no point to the game at all. Once again we are faced with a Marvel license which completely ignores the abilities of the character.

2) The graphics stink. The 3D environment is boring and jerky, and the draw distance is appalling. You can't see more than a few 'feet' into the screen at any one time. Punch any part of the scenery, and dodgy looking polygon fragments fly off, looking extremely stupid. The animation on the Hulk sprite is abysmal and the 'attention to detail' is shocking. Jump (if you could call it that) next to a wall and the Hulk's shadow moves halfway up the wall as well. The enemy sprites are dull, and extremely blocky to boot.

SMASH IT UP

Considering that the Hulk is one of the most powerful characters in the Marvel universe, it's bit of a surprise that he comes across as something of a wilting violet in the game. Delicate glass panels pose no obstacles to his big green fists, but anything harder than that and it's chaffed knuckles time. Punch a wall and all that happens is that pathetic polygon fragments come flying off. Locked doors remain so until switches are activated, and the feeble robot enemies take three or four hits to dispose of. This all stems from a complete lack of imagination on the developer's part; a Mass Destruction-style game in which the Hulk well and truly smashes would have infinitely preferable. And probably a lot better.



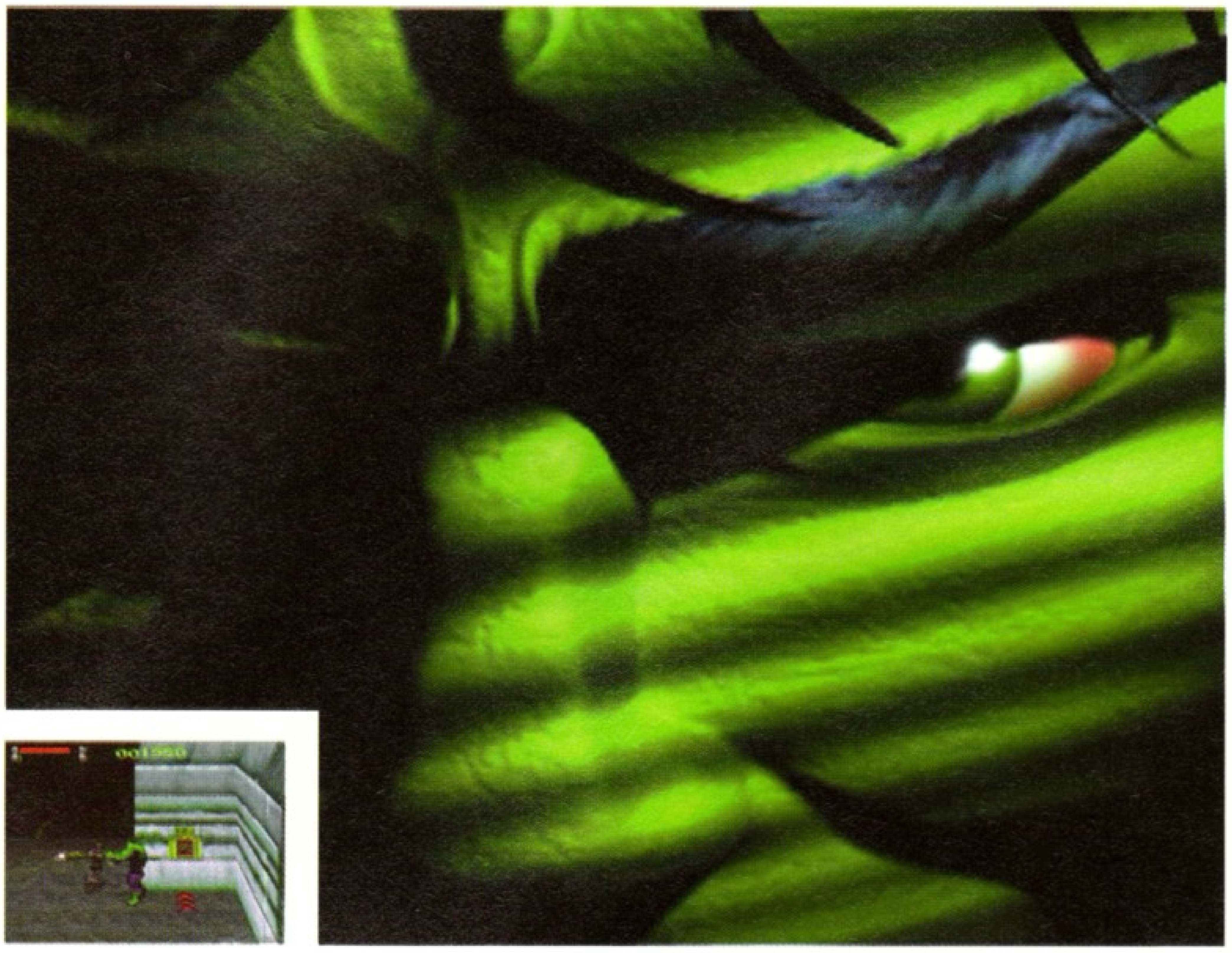


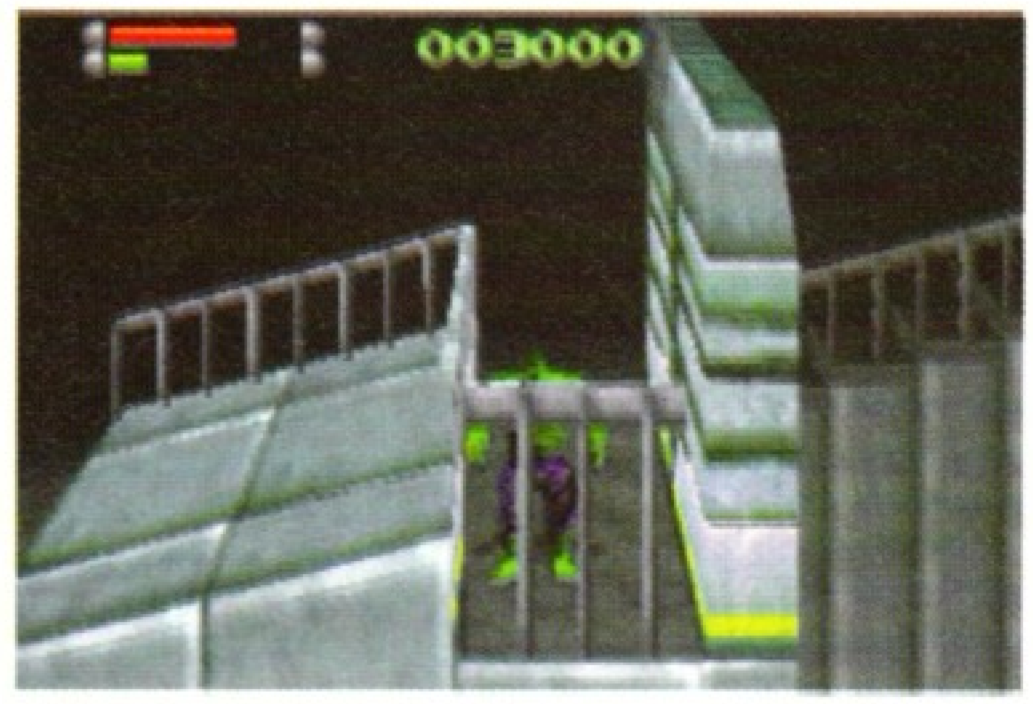


A lot of walking about in this particular game.



The landscape is very, very short on detail.





This should be a game of mass destruction (with Hulk fighting Abomination, Juggernaut etcetera), not this horrible concept.





Why should Hulk have to flip switches to solve puzzles and open doors? He can lift over 100 tons in the comics! Hulk smash!

Marvel's gamma-spawned behemoth makes a most notorious appearance in what is one of the most spectacularly awful games ever

3) The sound stinks. The music is appalling 'rawk' and the effects are rubbish too, but they end up being the best part of the game so don't deserve an in-depth molesting.

4) The gameplay stinks. Your control over the limping Hulk sprite is vague, and it's often hard to tell where you are in relation to the bad guys. Speaking of which, puny robot sprites seem to be able to dish out more damage than the all-powerful Hulk, which is preposterous. Airborne enemies are nigh-on impossible to hit, and the profusion of mines and laser turrets mean that the Hulk is in for a toasting. Even on the easy setting, if you last more than ten minutes you're doing well. This plainly wrong, as in the comics the Hulk has immeasurable strength and can leap up to three miles. Something to bear in mind for the sequel, perhaps?

5) There is no long term playability. Or much in the short term either. One go on The Incredible Hulk and you'll feel like you've lost all faith in videogames. Play it for more than ten minutes and you're either quite mad or a games reviewer. I qualify on both counts, and I couldn't stand it much longer than that.

So The Incredible Hulk is not quite a triple A release then. It's another one of those games which the publisher has quietly slipped into the shops hoping they'll sell with a few ads and no reviews. I'm not trying to be funny or clever by giving it such a low mark, the simple fact is that I cannot adequately describe just how bad it is. I can't imagine for a second that the developers looked at what they had and thought 'yeah, that's great, let's release it now'. I'm surprised that Eidos had the audacity to even release it, and I doubt that Marvel will be overjoyed with the end product either. The simple fact is that The Incredible Hulk is absolutely awful. It's an embarrassment to Eidos, to the developers, to Marvel, and to the Saturn in general.

STEPHEN FULLJAMES

SIDE STORY

There have been a long line of Marvel games on the Sega systems, from the original Spider-Man games on Master System and Megadrive through to the current Capcom arcade conversions such as X-Men: Children of the Atom and the upcoming Marvel Super Heroes. Most Marvel games also have a reputation for being rubbish, witness Hulk and the Captain America games on the Megadrive for examples. Here at SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE we'd like to see a conversion of the four player X-Men scrolling beat 'em up that was knocking around the arcades a few years ago. It was a top laugh and the Saturn could no doubt handle a spot-on conversion, how about it Konami US?





Hulk's stair-climbing abilities are well known.







The animation on the Hulk is really bad, the scrolling jerky.

Horrible "debris" appears when the Hulk hits a wall! Awful!

The 'Incredible' Hulk is the most malformed, hideous, shambling mockery of a travesty we've ever seen. This is the worst ever game officially released for the Saturn.

graphics	30
sound	37
playability	25
lastability	03

overall

15%

LOST VIKINGS 2: NORSE BY

Interplay's latest offering is another victory for gameplay over graphics with enough puzzles to keep even Carol Vorderman occupied for a while, though I could think of better ways to keep her occupied.

BY	INTERPLAY
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	PLATFORM PUZZLER
RELEASE	MARCH



It may look like a scene from Mr Bones, but it isn't.



Eric uses his rocket boots to reach the key as only he can.

THE ANSWER IS IN THE QUESTION

Conveniently placed around the first few puzzles are some panels with a question mark logo on them. When activated a speech bubble pops up which hints at how to overcome the problem at hand by showing you a certain move that one of the vikings posseses. Whilst you may think this detracts from the fun of solving puzzles, they are made scarce after the first level leaving all the elaborate and complex puzzles for you to sort out on your own.





Olaf will need help if he's to get through the wall.



Baleog is the only Viking with a weapon to kill baddies.









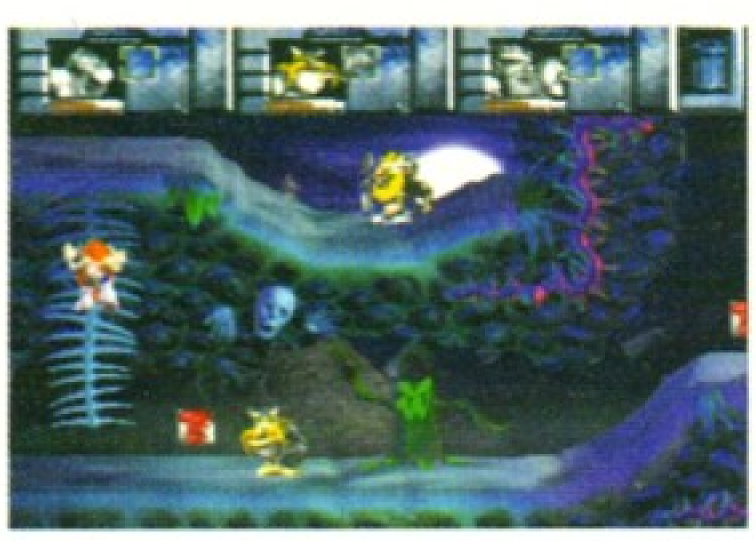


Interplay seem to have found a niche in the market with their latest release Vikings 2: Norse by Norsewest. Not only does it have the distinction of having one of the worst titles of any console game but it's also the only game I can think of with Vikings as the main characters. This shouldn't come as too much of a surprise as Vikings were not nice people. A large proportion of their time was taken up with raping, pillaging, wearing lethal head gear and belching. Beam Software who programmed Vikings 2 were obviously aware of the uniqueness of this game and saw fit to exploit it to the full and as such have made Vikings 2 the definitive Viking game by which all others shall be judged. Not that I'm predicting a whole wave of Viking clones in the near future.

The eagle-eyed among you may recognise this as the sequel to the very popular Megadrive and Super NES hit, Lost Vikings. Well guess what, they're lost again. Whilst voyaging home from foreign lands, Olaf the Stout, Eric the Swift and Baleog the Fierce are plucked from their long boat by a mysterious teleporter beam just as they were in spitting distance of home. Our three unlikely heroes re-emerge on board the space craft of the evil alien tyrant, Tomater, who has a painful and bloody demise awaiting them. However, largely as a result of technical difficulties, the Vikings manage to escape his evil clutches and gain some special weapons. But before they have chance to return to the land of blonde hair and blue eyes our heroes are whisked off once more to a mysterious world somewhere within the confines of space. Intriguing...

The game itself is a platformer which incorporates a large amount of puzzle-solving. Each of the Vikings has their own special abilities and weapons which, when combined enables them to overcome all manner of obstacles. One Viking alone cannot complete any of the puzzles so it becomes a matter of teamwork utilising the strong points of each Viking to compensate for the deficiencies of the others. As the player you are in control of all three Vikings and must switch back and forth between them selecting the one whose ability best suits the task. However if any of the bearded bunch should perish and ascend to the great long boat in the sky then effectively it's game





Teamwork is essential if you are to be successful in Vikings 2. Just remember that.



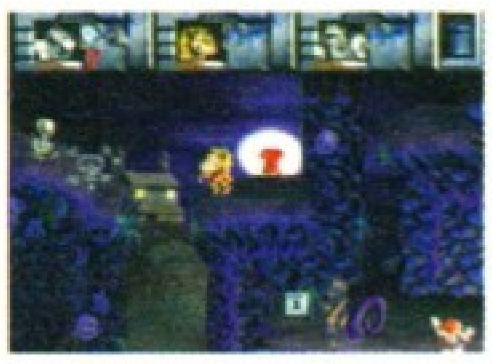
As Baleog the Fierce uses his bionic arm to destroy one of the mutant creatures, Eric and Olaf ponder over the moral justifications of such an act. Hmm...

NORSEWEST



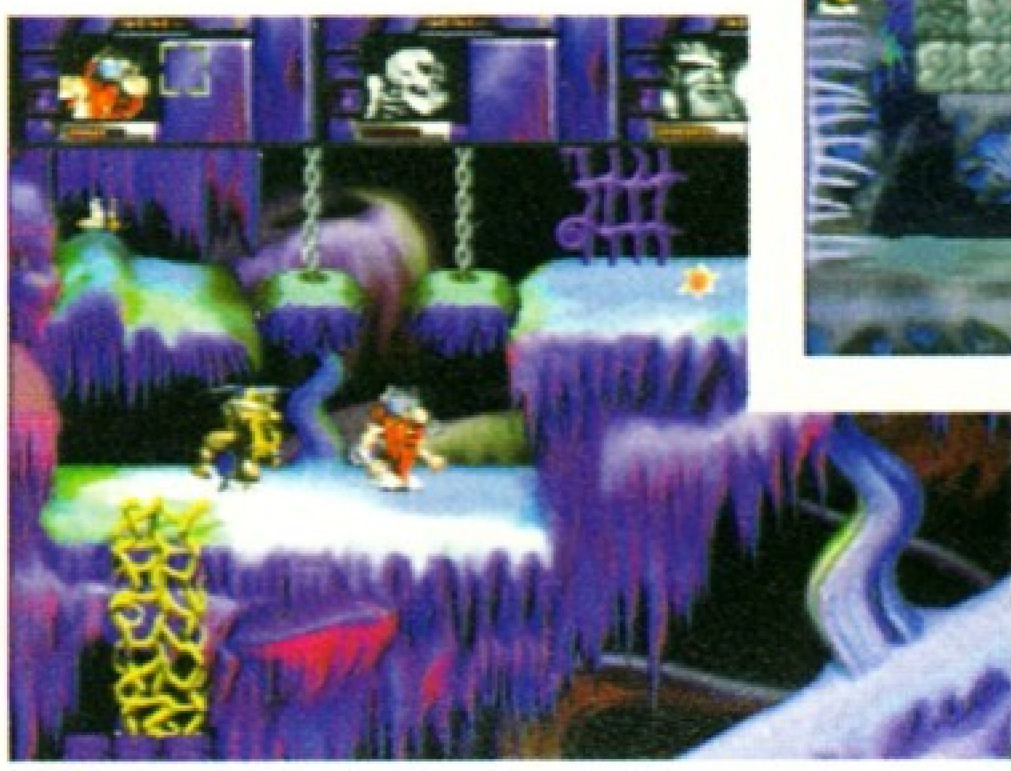


The witch is waiting to greet you at the end.

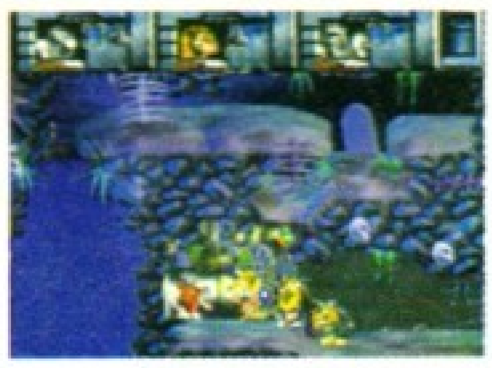


Fang turns up now and again.





You don't have to be in MENSA to figure this out. But it helps.



Aha! The illusive teleporter.



Water based puzzle-solving action courtesy of Eric the Swift.



over as all Vikings are needed to complete the game.

The task that awaits our three heroes is to seek out the various ingredients needed by the local witch to make a short range teleportation spell to eventually get them home. As it's only short range though they can only be teleported to the next level, where again they must find more ingredients hidden on the platforms and guarded by hideous creatures. The ingredients themselves are not difficult to find, however they are usually at the other end of a tricky puzzle. Once they have been retrieved it's simply a matter of taking them to the witches cauldron so she can work her magic. The problem for our troublesome trio is that the witch hasn't quite got to grips with her spells and has a nasty habit of losing Vikings in the teleportation process. Normally our heroes would be stuffed without the help of each other but thankfully extra characters have been thrown in along the way who are playable once they've been rescued. Like the Vikings they too have their own special abilities such as Fang the Wolf who has razor-sharp claws to attack his foes and Scorch the Dragon who breaths fire onto his attackers. To be perfectly honest I'm not a great fan of puzzle games and not having played Lost Vikings before I had no idea what to expect. However, after playing Vikings 2 for the best part of a weekend I was pleasantly surprised with what I found. Vikings 2 is an incredibly fun game to play with a novel twist on the normal platform formula by placing you in control of three characters simultaneously instead of just one. This adds a whole strategy element to the proceedings making this a thinking mans (or womens for that matter) platformer. The difficulty level of the vast amount of puzzles is just right. You start off by being told how to overcome the first few puzzles and with which character, then each puzzle that follows is an elaborate and complex variation on these. Coupled with the cool sound effects and a good dose of humour, usually via the voice-overs, Vikings 2 has a very cartoon type of feel to it reminding me somewhat of the Earthworm Jim series. The in-game music deserves a mention too as it's not your average platformer music and is pretty cool if you're into all that techno stuff. The bottom line is that Vikings 2 is excellent fodder for platform/puzzle enthusiasts, with plenty of lastability.

LEE NUTTER

LOST VIKINGS... AGAIN!

After their adventures in the 16-bit original, the sequel picks up with our triumphant trio making their way home on their Viking long boat. But the evil alien Tomater has other more sinister plans for them and teleports them onto his space craft. A punch-up later and our heroes are teleported to a strange world, where once again they're lost. Who said lightning doesn't strike twice. Just check out the intro for further details.





You'll find that many of the puzzles involve finding keys for the gates scattered about the levels. Actually finding them isn't that difficult, it's getting to them that causes the problems.



After pinching a magical helmet from Tomaters space craft, Eric (the ginger one) has the ability to swim under water for long periods of time without the need for oxygen. That's handy.

Look beyond the 16-bit graphics and there's a whole lot of gameplay just waiting to be discovered. Recommended for action puzzle fanatics.

graphics	70
sound	90
playability	92
lastability	90

overall

89%

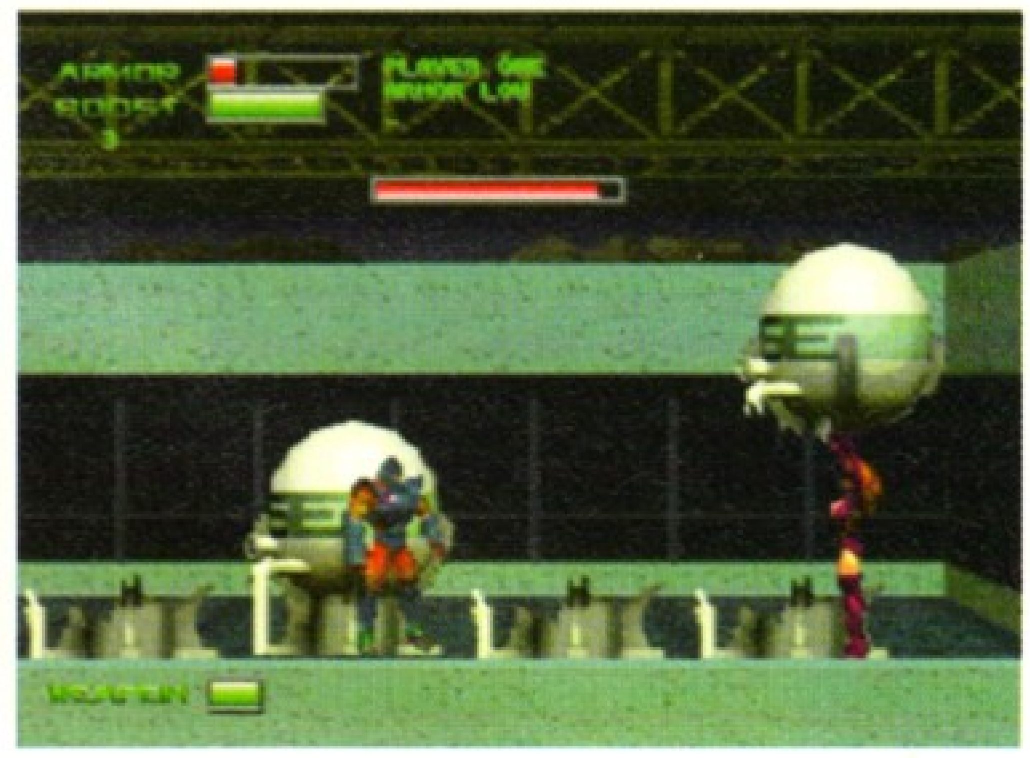
REVIEW

IRON MAN™/X-O MANOWAR

Sick of playing X-Men? Tired of waiting for Marvel Super Heroes to emerge? Well cheer up, because Acclaim's latest super hero license may be just what you're looking for. Then again...

BY	ACCLAIM
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	PLATFORM/SHOOTER
RELEASE	OUT NOW







X-O Manowar comes face to face with one of the aliens which has the ability to fire bolts of electricity from its finger tips.





The pyrotechnics are rather unspectacular to say the least.

After the ludicrously appalling Batman Forever, Acclaim have obviously acquired a taste for comic licences and as such have released Iron Man and X-O Manowar in Heavy Metal to give it its full title. Programmed by the very same people responsible for the recent Batman effort, they're obviously hoping to redeem themselves with their latest release, a side-scrolling platform shoot 'em up no less. Featuring the two metal titans for the first time in a game ever, it is claimed to be the ultimate in super hero power and realism. Hmm... We'll see.

The game itself requires our two heroes to progress through the various levels carrying out the mission objectives outlined prior to the start of each level. Don't worry too much about this though because they have absolutely no bearing on the gameplay at all. You simply walk or run from left to right killing all sorts of evil wrong doers who have the misfortune to get in your way. At the end of each level you'll come face to face with a nasty boss character who attempts to draw to an end your super heroic life. At times, these are quite tricky to kill, especially when a time limit is imposed upon the proceedings.

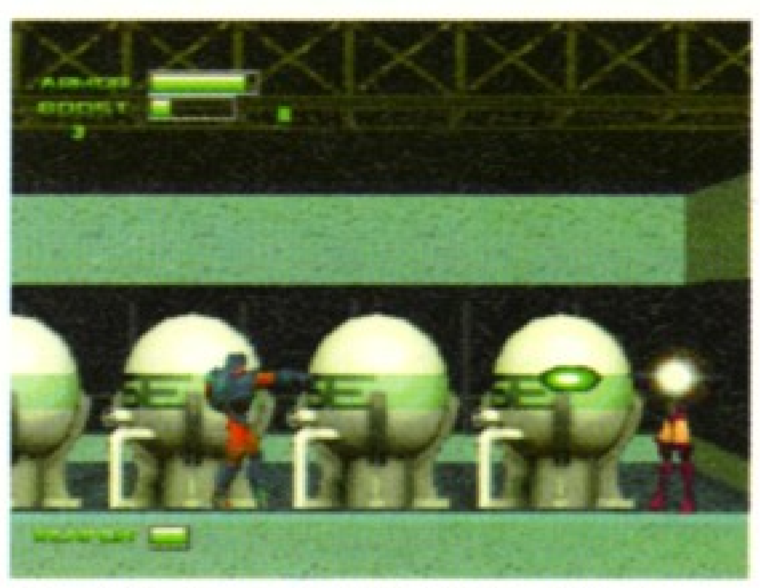
As the player you are given the choice to play as either of the two main characters, Iron Man or X-O Manowar. Each of them differ in terms of super powers and abilities but overall are pretty evenly matched. They both have a variety of weapons, usually of the ray beam variety which can be upgraded considerably throughout the course of the game. This is done by collecting the power-ups discarded by the bad guys when they are killed. Both characters also feature a boost move, which sets them in flight for a short period of time via their rocket boots. This becomes useful for reaching the villains that are hiding on some of

SURFACE TO AIR BATTLES

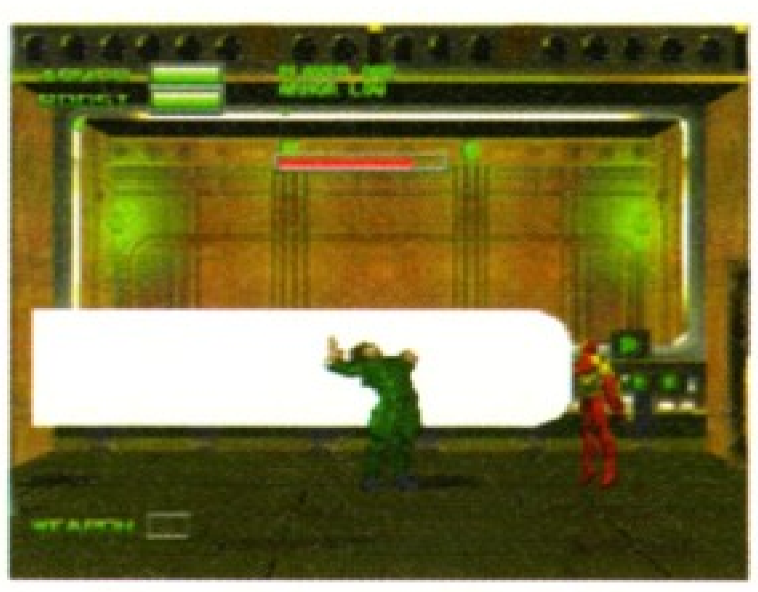
The one improvement that can be seen in the Iron Man game over the recent Batman game is that the action takes place on several platforms. This is achieved via the boost move that both of the two super heroes possess which sets them in flight for a limited period of time allowing them to reach the higher levels. Eventually though the boost runs out requiring our heroes to sit on the sidelines for a while until their boost power is replenished.



Battle as either Iron Man or X-O Manowar through the cosmic carnage to prevent the imminent apocalyptic meltdown.



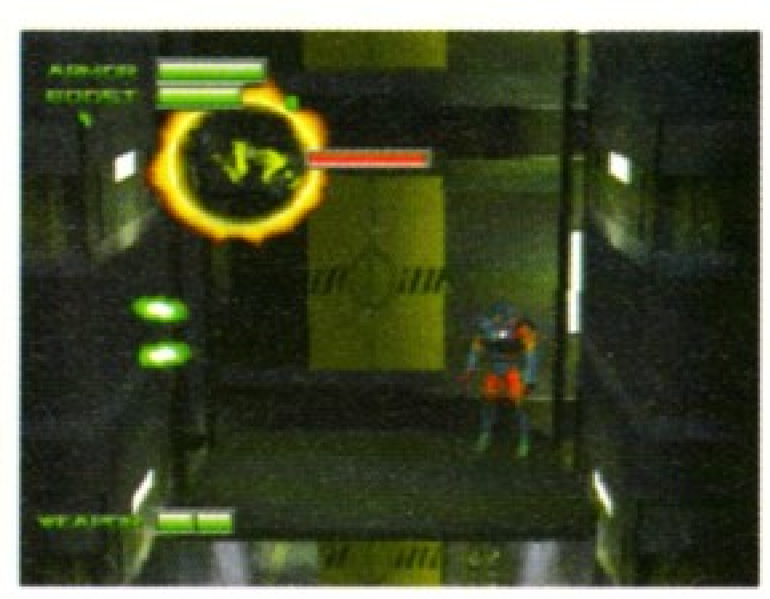
One of the bosses is Geri of Spice Girls fame.



Iron Man's special weapon is the EMP Device.

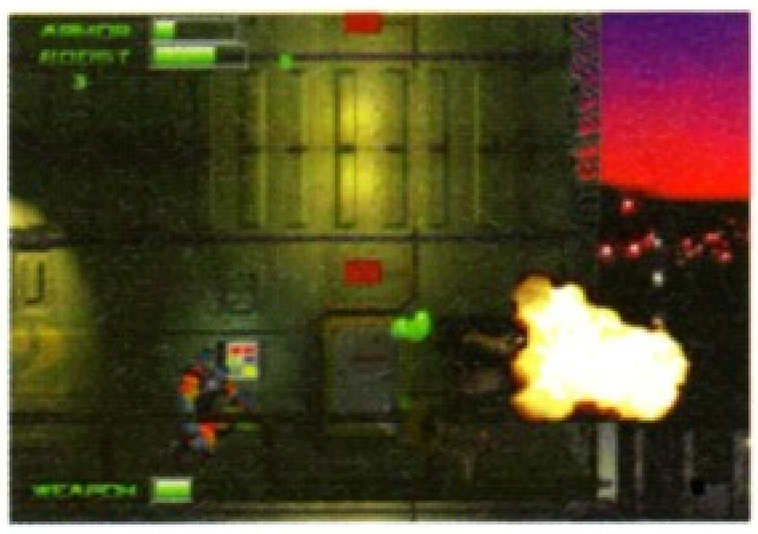








Stand well back from the spider because it sprays acid at you.





X-O Manowar demonstrating his bi-directional laser weapon.



X-O Manowar shows us the ancient art of Yogic flying.







LASER POWER

Each of the weapons that either Iron Man or X-O Manowar carries can be fully upgraded by collecting the power-ups that are left behind by the dead villains. So for example if you collect the right power-up your normal pulse laser can become a bi-directional homing laser. This is in addition to your EMP Device which fires a huge beam from your chest.



If Acclaim have a quality control department, all those in it should be very ashamed of themselves

the higher platforms and dodging the ones that aren't. However including this has obviously been at the sacrifice of being able to walk into and out of the screen making the gameplay even more linear. A two-player option has also been included which adds somewhat to the longevity and also makes completing the game a slightly easier task.

However try as I might, I find it hard to be enthusiastic about Acclaim's latest offering. You'd think Acclaim would know better than to release such substandard nonsense as it does their reputation no good whatsoever. Their name is quickly becoming synonymous with the words "crap" and "game". Iron Man obviously runs on the same engine as the recent Batman Forever game and likewise the graphics are terrible with the motion capture system being equally as disappointing. They fail to scrape the surface of the Saturn's awesome 2D sprite handling capabilities showing us little that couldn't be achieved on the Megadrive. As in Batman Forever the end-of-level bosses are particularly ugly to look at and all employ the exact same cheap tactics. It's so frustrating! Gameplay wise there are no revelations here. The action is repetitive with little variety in the moves or weapons and with the mission objectives being incidental to the gameplay. The music is also pretty dire. Yes, I understand that there is a heavy metal theme to the game but that really is no excuse for the terrible music. Thankfully it can be turned off on the options screen otherwise I would have done myself in by now.

In short, Iron Man and X-O Manowar in Heavy Metal is more of a chore than a challenge. Don't be fooled by the Marvel Comics (or indeed Acclaim comics) licence, it doesn't make the game any more enjoyable. If Acclaim have a quality control department, all those in it should be on the receiving end of a brutal kicking for letting this one slip through the net. Games like this have no place on the next generation consoles and will not be tolerated.

LEE NUTTER

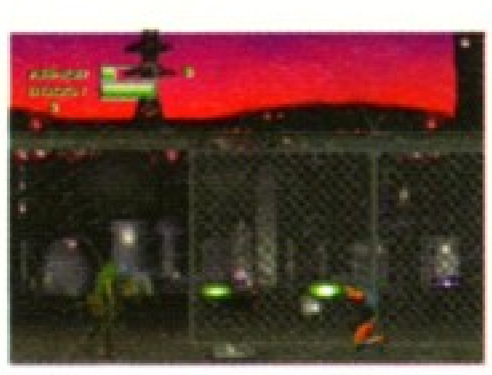


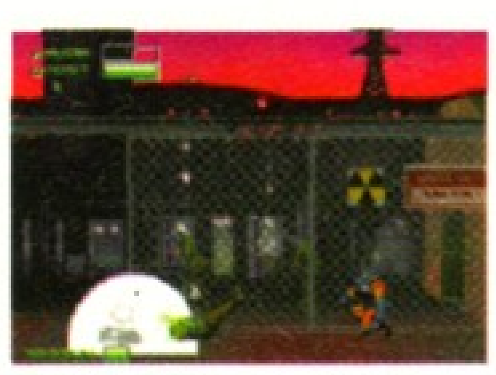


Doesn't it look incredibly similar to Robocop Vs Terminator?



Arachnaphobics beware as this game features quite a few hairy spiders which produce a blocky explosion when shot at.





A few blasts from X-O Manowar's pulse laser beam and this evil alien is toast leaving in his wake a weapon power-up.

With little variation in the dull gameplay and terrible graphics this is one game to be avoided at all costs. A very poor offering from Acclaim.

graphics	34
sound	38
playability	30
lastability	28

overall 33%

REVIEW

MASS DESTRUCTION

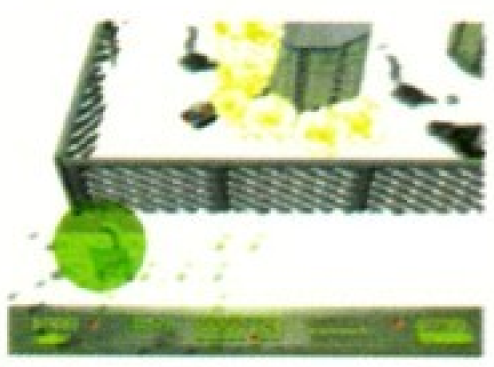
If ever a title could effectively sum up a game in two words this would be it. There's little ambiguity in the title Mass Destruction. Such a name conjures up vivid images of a kill or be killed, destroy everything in sight kind of game. And that's just what it is. Sort of.

BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOT "EM UP
RELEASE	TBA

MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS!

There are some excellent graphical touches in Mass Destruction to make it as good to look at as it is to play. The pyrotechnics are amazing, with massive sprite based explosions as you unleash a couple of missiles in the general direction of an enemy building. Especially impressive is the awesome flame thrower which burns everything to the ground. The way the explosions reflect in the water looks pretty cool too.







Mindless destruction at its absolute best. You just can't beat it. Or at least that's what the programmers thought.

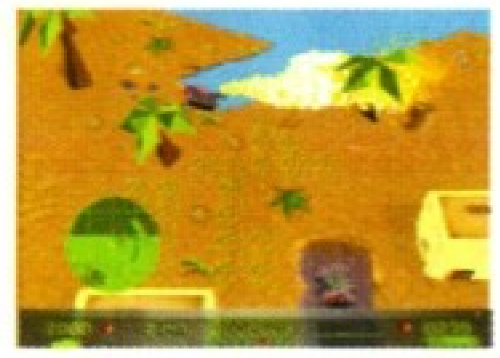


Failure to comply with your mission objectives results in you being whisked off to a court marshal in this big chopper.



Mass Destruction originally started life as a PC game before being hastily snapped up for a Saturn release under the imaginative title of Tank. A few months later and after reverting back to its original title the Saturn version of Mass Destruction is ready for release. And it's going to be a corker. You'll see. The game itself is possibly one of the least pretentious games about. It has absolutely no plot, no storyline and no justifications for the mindless violence and mayhem that ensues. It's being touted as a videogame produced for the sole purpose of entertainment. It's that simple. You could however say it's pretentious in advertising its unpretentiousness, but that's just being pedantic (and maybe a tad pretentious - Rich). Mass Destruction also bears uncanny similarities to the Amiga classic Firepower and the 3DO sequel Return Fire so you'd be forgiven for thinking that they were somehow related. But they aren't, as essentially Mass Destruction is a very different game indeed. Intrigued? Read on...

Mass Destruction places you in control of one of three tanks, each with different armour and speed but all retaining the same lethal arsenal. Your task is to complete your various mission objectives within the fully functional environment. The missions are usually of the search, destroy and rescue variety with the overwhelming emphasis being on the destroy bit. Once your mission has been successfully completed your are transported to the next mission in a different environment. Whilst this may sound remarkably similar to other titles Mass Destruction differs in one major respect. The idea of the game is not necessarily to progress through to the end of the game, but in a similar way to NiGHTS and various games of old, Mass Destruction is a score attack game. Each of the destructible enemy buildings, soldiers, tanks and jeeps are worth a certain amount of points. The idea is to cause as much destruction as possible to get the biggest score. This is entered on the high score table





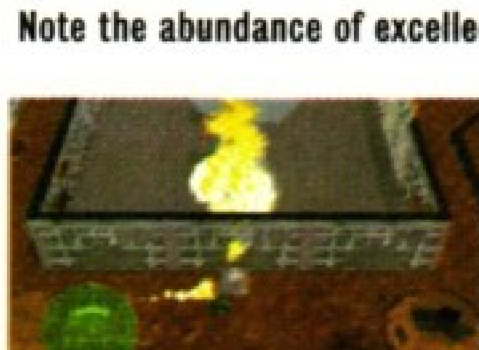
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The huge sprite-based explosions as your enviroment crumbles around your ears look very spectacular indeed.



Note the abundance of excellent explosions.

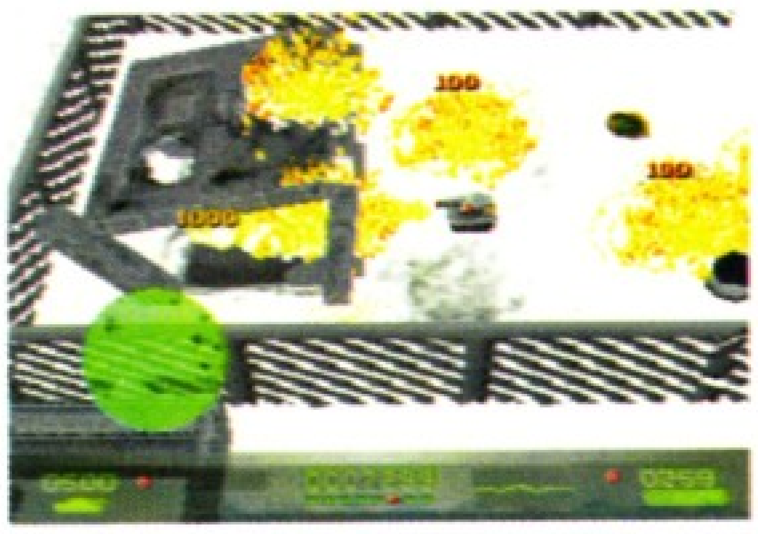




Flame the troops and watch them scatter... on fire!



Destroying civilian buildings in downtown suburbia is cool.





Just take a gander at the reflections of the massive explosions in the water. Pretty damn impressive or what, eh?



The sandy desert setting gives way to soem explosive action as a couple of missiles are launched at the local kibutz.







OUT OF AMMO?

Power-ups are an integral part of virtually every shoot 'em up and Mass Destruction is by no means an exception. Once the ammo is suitably depleted it becomes necessary to seek out power-ups to replenish your supply. These are usually scattered about the levels and are also hidden inside enemy buildings.







To the left you'll see our tank under attack from enemy forces.

Mass Destruction **looks great, it's easy to play** and with the score attack element it should **occupy you for quite some time.**

and the idea is for you to come back and beat it time and time again. Or so the theory goes.

Naturally with this being a game which focuses substantially on destruction, the programmers would have to make the destruction pretty spectacular. And that's just what they've done. Each of your weapons is capable of making some huge sprite-based explosions as your environment crumbles around your ears which looks very spectacular, especially when you can see the reflections in the water. Though the action is viewed from a plan perspective the environment is all in 3D and fully functional, meaning your tank reacts to every bump and dip in a most realistic way. In addition just about everything is totally destructible, even the trees which results in some thunderous explosive sound effects. All this running at a super-smooth 60 frames per second, that's the same as Saturn VF2.

On the down side though, NMS have left out the all important two-player mode which really is a travesty considering how well it worked in 3DO Return Fire. The game engine is obviously excellent and easily capable of supporting a split screen two-player, which leaves you feeling that this really is an opportunity missed. And although the missions are quite varied, ultimately what each of them boils down to is destroy everything which after a while may get a tad repetitive. Having said that, Mass Destruction looks great, it's easy to play and with the score attack element it should occupy you for some time. If it's a top blaster you're after, this is definitely worth a look.

LEE NUTTER



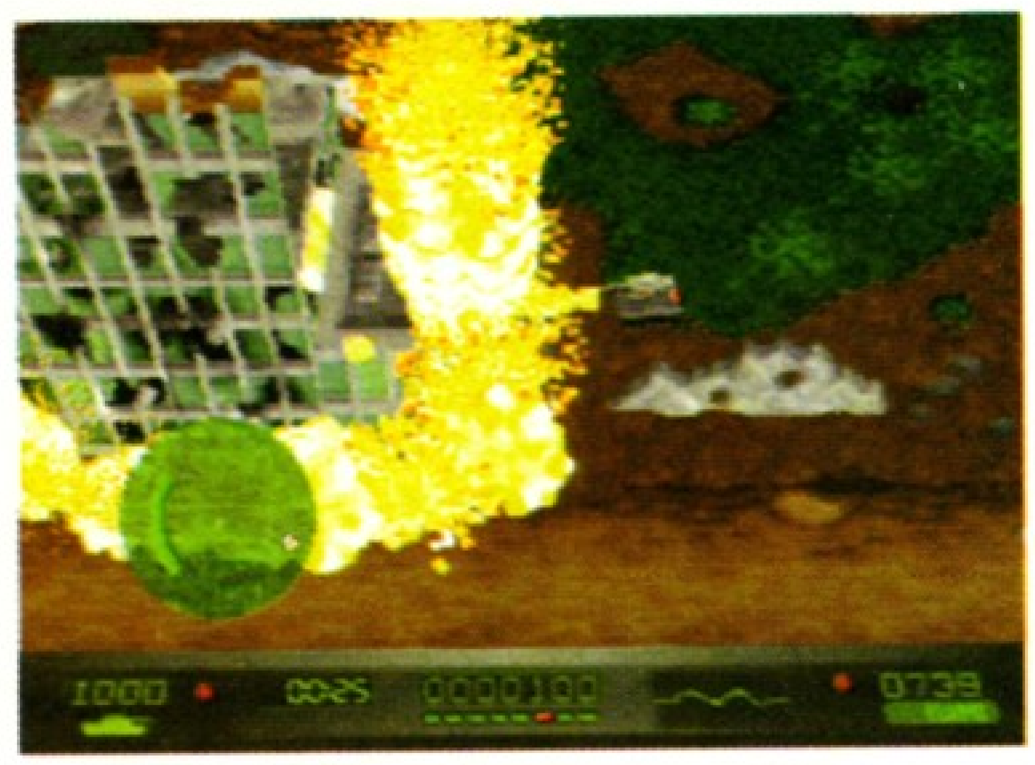
Unleash one of your mighty vortex missiles and a huge spherical fire ball engulfs all your immediate surroundings. Cool!







The nuclear plant is soon to be an enviromental dissaster.



What was once a beautiful piece of modern architecture is now a flaming heap of rubble. Essential for racking up high scores.





(Left) A good example of what not to do at a petrol statiuon.

An excellent blasting game based around a stunning game engine, marred only by the tragic omission of a split-screen two-player mode. Still a great laugh, though.

graphics	90
sound	88
playability	86
lastability	87

overall

87%

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Cast your mind back. Way back. Further than that. No, you're not trying hard enough. What can you see? The dawn of the 32-bit consoles and some game called Spot Goes to Hollywood? That's right. And now, at long last, Spot is finished. Well hallelujah.

BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	ISOMETRIC PLATFORMER
RELEASE	OUT NOW

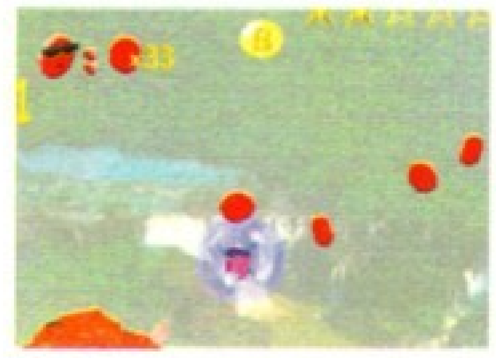


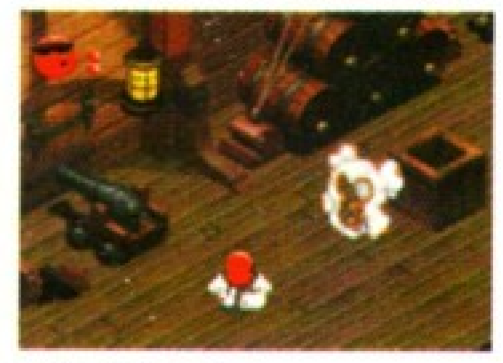
Spot indulges in a spot of opera. Oh how we laughed....



These 'fashionably late' releases seem to be something of a theme over at Virgin. Spot Goes to Hollywood first surfaced in 1994, and only now is it complete. Heart of Darkness is also one of theirs, and that's been in development for over three years as well. But who can blame the programmers for wanting their creations to be perfect? After all, every Quake release date given out by id software was simply 'when it's finished'. Still, we're not here to ruminate about missed release dates and development hell, we're here to ruminate about Spot Goes to Hollywood. So let's ruminate. Right then.

A sequel to the classic Megadrive platformer (that's the original Cool Spot, by the way, not the version of Spot Goes to Hollywood released on the creaky 16-bit system over eighteen months ago), Spot Goes to Hollywood is an attempt to take the round red zitty one into the next generation, utilising rendered graphics, quality sprite animation and the freedom offered by an isometric playfield. The beautifully rendered intro sequence explains what little there is of the plot. Whilst slumming it inside a cinema vending machine, Spot gets sucked in a movie projector, and so must battle his way through six movie themed worlds if he is to get back to the comfort of his refrigerated fizzy drink dispenser in one piece.





Spot meets a guy with a bone through his hooter.



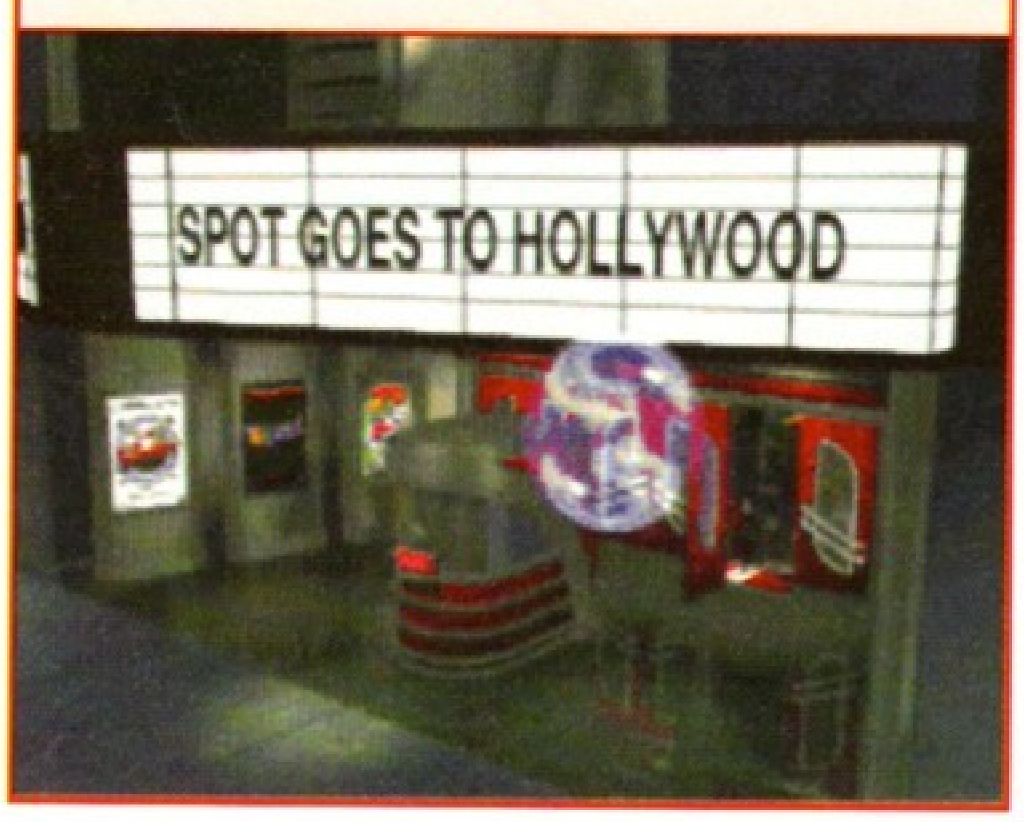
Of course whilst Spot has been languishing in development hell, Sega themselves have got in on the isometric platformer act with Sonic 3D. So how do the two compare? Well, both have rendered backgrounds, but while Sonic also makes use of rendered sprites, Spot and his adversaries are well animated cell-drawn creations. They have a bit of a Disney feel to them, maybe even too much of a Disney feel in places; a case in point is the wild boar sprite on the Jungle level that bears an uncanny resemblance to Pumbaa from The Lion King. The animation on Spot himself is excellent, and the little red guy has the same 'kewl' personality

MOVIE MADNESS

The six worlds in Spot Goes to Hollywood all have a tenuous movie-related theme. You begin on a pirate ship under attack from a giant octopus, before moving on to an Indiana Jones-esque jungle temple, which includes the compulsory mine cart level, and a haunted house home to none other than Count Dracula himself. In addition to this, there are three bonus worlds comprising of a Wild West themed zone, a blatant Jurassic Park rip-off, and a sci-fi extravaganza finale. Locating these hidden sections, however, will require all the platforming skills you can muster.







Spot Goes to Hollywood doesn't hold a candle to more recently developed software such as Sonic 3D



Spot's caught in a bubble. Again.





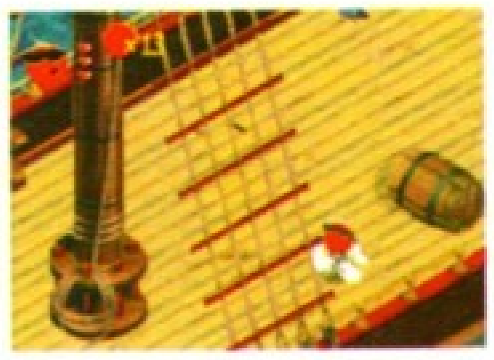


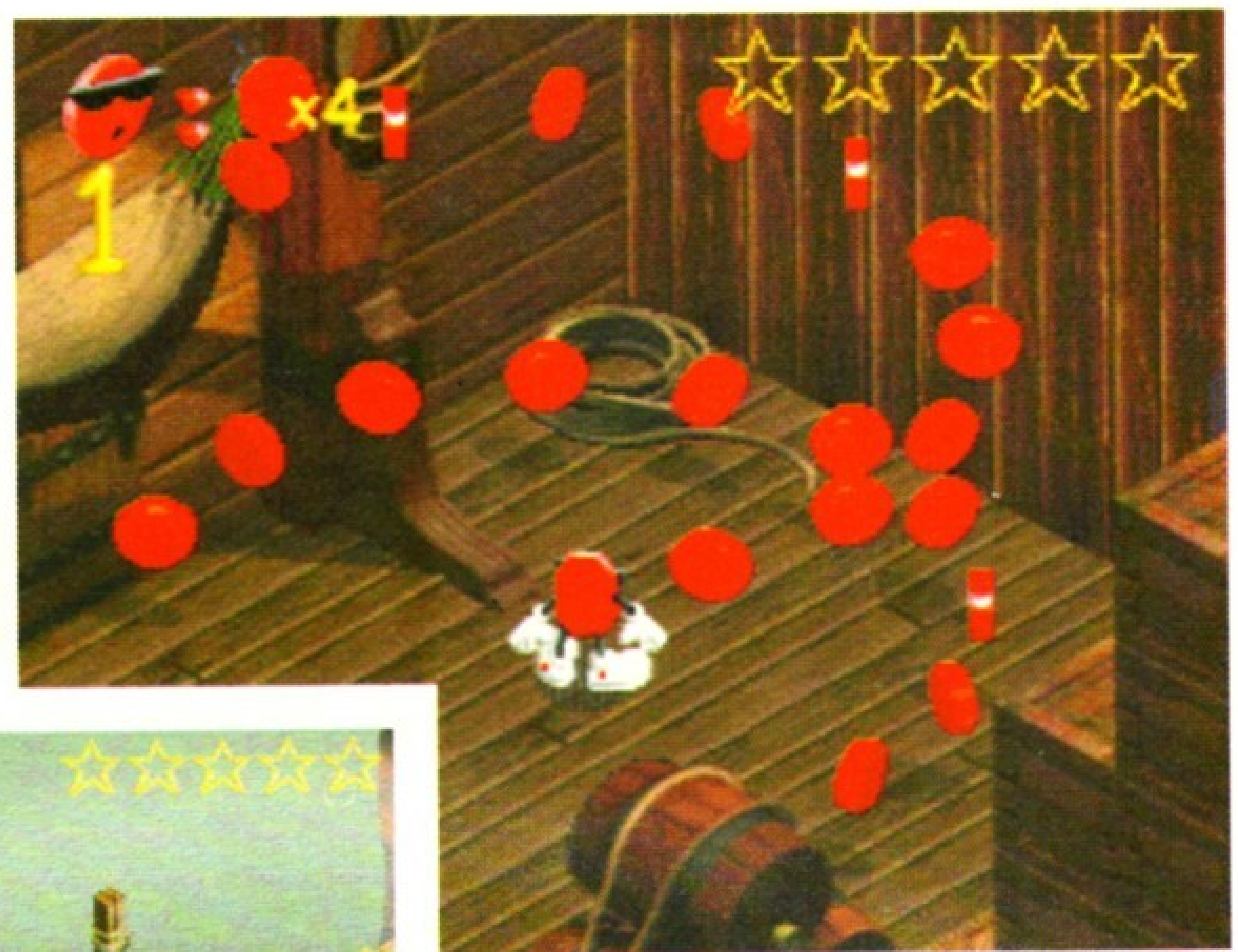


The minecart level is probably the best part of the game. Those yellow arrows change the points when shot.



Out in the wilds of Adventure world, Spot finds a big B.





Bonus areas like this offer SpotDots galore. Yes, yes and YES!





The animation on Spot himself is excellent, and the little red guy has the same 'kewl' personality he did in the Megadrive original.

he did in the Megadrive original. Leave him alone for a while, and he'll make calls on his mobile phone or tap impatiently on the screen.

Unfortunately the level construction is not as varied as that in Sonic 3D. Just about all the levels are completely linear, so you find yourself just going up and right all the time. This is not so bad on the initial pirate ship levels, as you would expect a boat to be long and thin, but long, thin cave systems or haunted houses? I don't think so. There are loads of hidden warps to find which whisk players off to the innumerable bonus sections, but even they don't break up what



soon becomes a very monotonous experience. The mine cart section is admittedly quite good fun, but even this becomes frustrating as you continually just fail to make a jump you couldn't quite see. It also highlights the inadequacies of the level design. It's set in a mine, so there could be all kinds of chasms, drop-offs and what-not, but in the end it's just more of the same 'up and right' inaction on a decidedly flat floor.

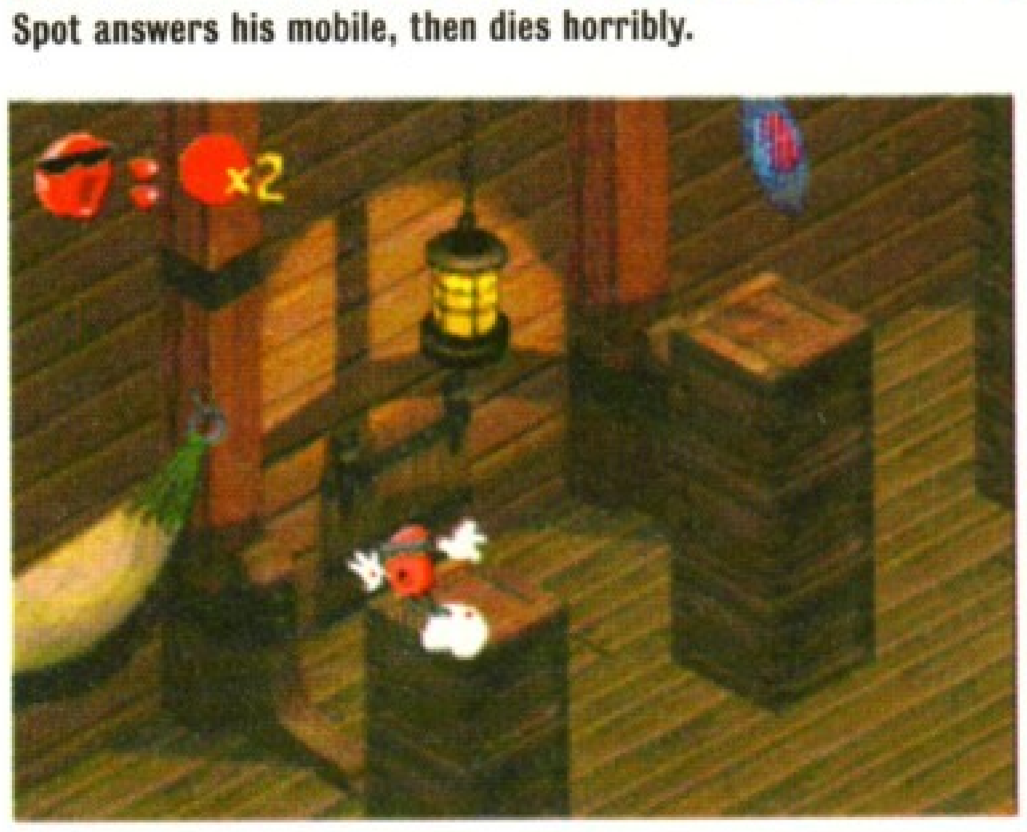
Spot Goes to Hollywood is not in the same league of badness as some of the atrocities we've seen this month, but there's nothing about it that really leaps out and grabs you by the throat. It looks reasonable, but is nowhere near the cutting edge, probably due to its interminable development time. I think that that is really what lets the whole game down. Spot is effectively now two or three years out of date, and developers should surely have had time to do something about the sloppy controls and poor collision detection which only add to the game's woes. Had this game been a Saturn launch title, it would have been unique for the time, and would probably have been reviewed more sympathetically. As it is, Spot Goes to Hollywood doesn't hold a candle to more recently developed software such as Sonic 3D. It's a nice try, but it's a bit on the late side.

STEPHEN FULLJAMES





Spot answers his mobile, then dies horribly.



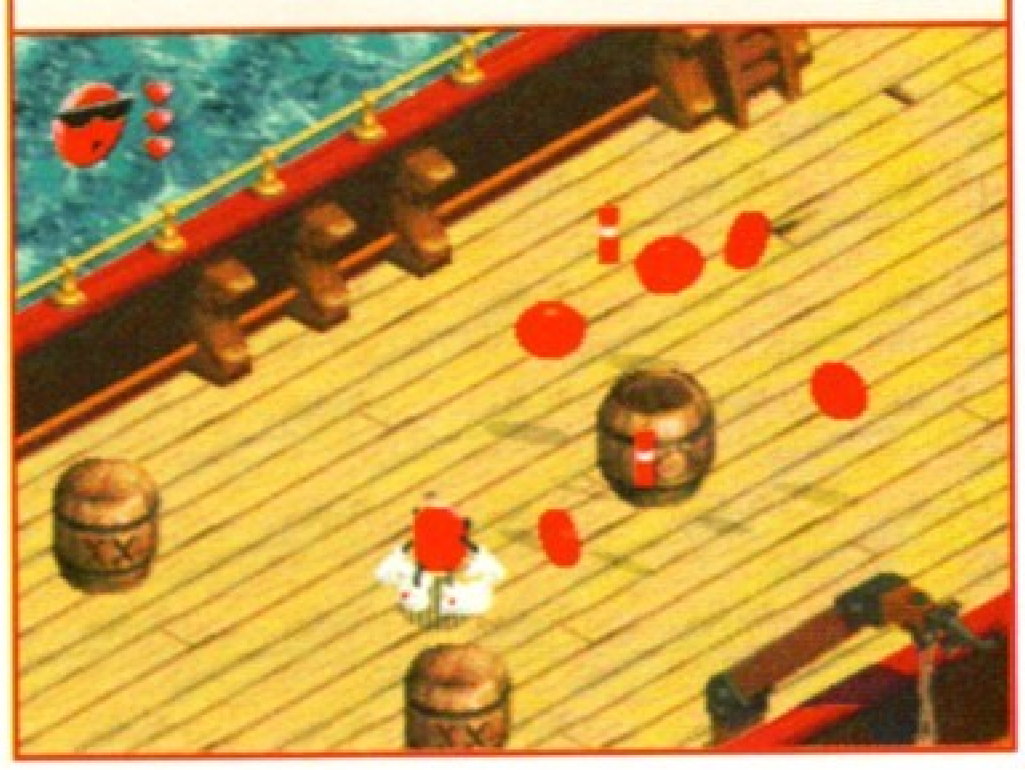




The clapperboards act as restart points in Spot's adventure.

HOT SHOTS

By shooting the barrel type objects found on each level, Spot collects special weapon upgrades that aid him in his quest. The most common power-up is a simple 3-way shot, but he can also acquire freeze shots, power shots and dynamite packs that blow even the most stubborn obstacles out of the zit-like one's path. Also available inside bonus barrels are SpotDots and the occasional bad guy, so stay alert.







Quite simply; too little, too late. Far too late, in fact. Let down by the sloppy controls, Spot is outclassed in every way by Sonic 3D, and as such is not worthy of your attention.

graphics	80
sound	85
playability	71
lastability	68
overall	70%

MEGAMAN X3

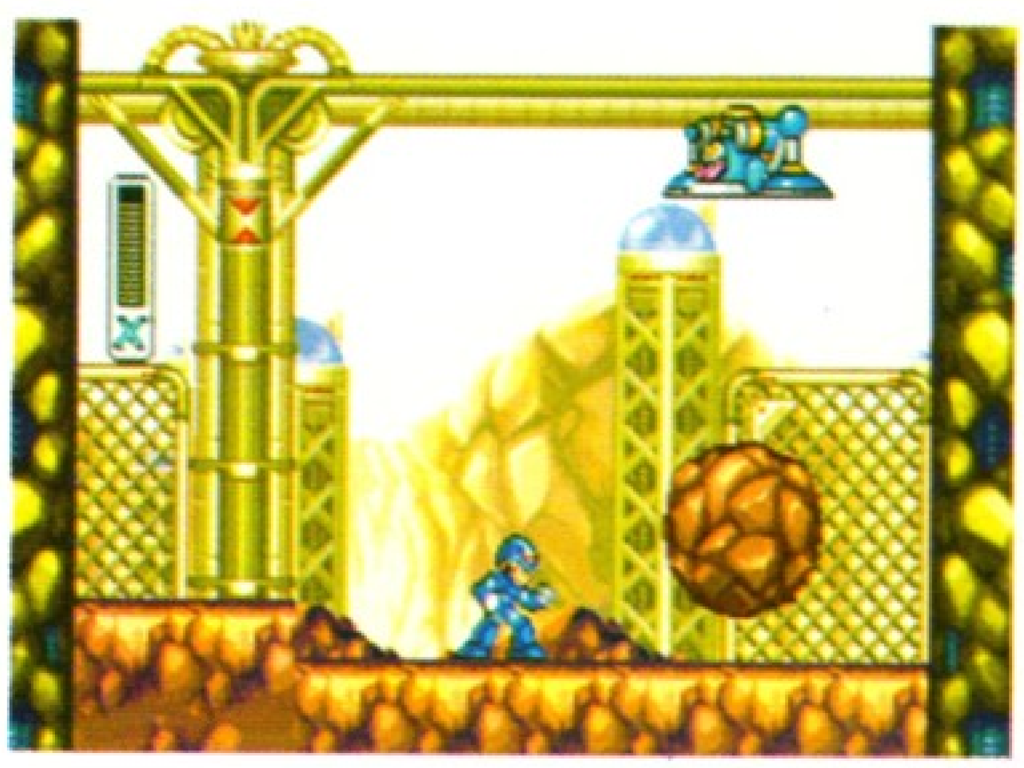


Capcom's classic platform hero has finally arrived on the Saturn in his first official release, but can Megaman really hope to recapture his 16-bit heroics of yesteryear? Find out NOW!

BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	PLATFORM/SHOOTER
RELEASE	MARCH



The obligatory ice level raises its ugly head once again. Note the HUGE vertical borders cropping the screen.









Devious Sub-bosses hamper Megaman's journey.

Capcom's resurgence in recent years has surely been nothing short of miraculous. From a company that became complacent by releasing rehashed, carbon copies of its own successful Street Fighter series to its streamlined rebirth (due in some small part to both Resident Evil and that self same fighting game series) Capcom have managed to reinvent themselves. Fortunately, the mass market appeal of certain titles has enabled Capcom to continue producing fan favourite games for limited, niche markets. Chief among these has to be the Megaman series (known in Japan as Rockman), popular for their colourful, cartoony graphics, testing platform action and over-the-top bosses. Now celebrating his tenth anniversary with the gorgeous Megaman 8, Capcom's bionic blue boy is making his first UK Saturn appearance in Megaman X3 thanks to Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Originally released on the Super NES as the third episode of the second Rockman series, MMX3 is set hundreds of years after the NES series. X is a future version of the original Megaman who was found in a capsule by a scientist named Dr Cain. Using X's advanced design, Cain built highly sophisticated robots that could think for themselves and called them "Reploids". Trouble arose when Reploids started to turn against humanity. In order to stop the droids that went 'Maverick' a special police force was formed called the, believe it or not, Maverick Hunters. The leader of this force, a Reploid named Sigma, went AWOL and later lead other Reploids in a full scale attack against humans. X decided to join the remaining Maverick Hunters, now led by a Reploid named Zero, in the fight against Sigma. In the first battle against the forces of Sigma, Zero sacrificed himself to help X defeat Sigma and his forces. A few years later, three followers of Sigma formed the "X Hunters" in an attempt to destroy X and bring Sigma back. The X Hunters had found all of Zero's parts and were attempting to rebuild him, but they needed Zero's control chip which was held at the Maverick Hunters' home base. X had to defeat the new rivals to retrieve Zero's parts, and then faced off once again with Sigma.



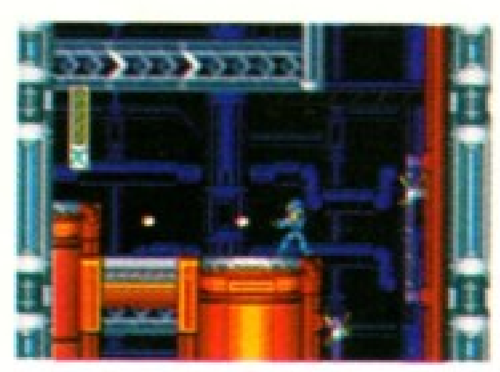


After the destruction of Sigma, the world once again began to return to peace. A Reploid scientist, called Dr Doppler, found that the reason the Reploids went maverick was due to a virus, which he managed to isolate and neutralise. After Doppler's discovery was put into use, several powerful Reploids became followers of Doppler and joined with him. Months later, something went wrong and Doppler and his army turned irregular from the virus that Doppler supposedly neutralised. X, now joined by Zero, set out once again to take up the fight...

It's not as if the Saturn can't handle a few layers of parallax scrolling and a handful of 2D animated characters so why the screen reduction?



The poor quality of the opening cartoon sequence is dodgy to say the least.

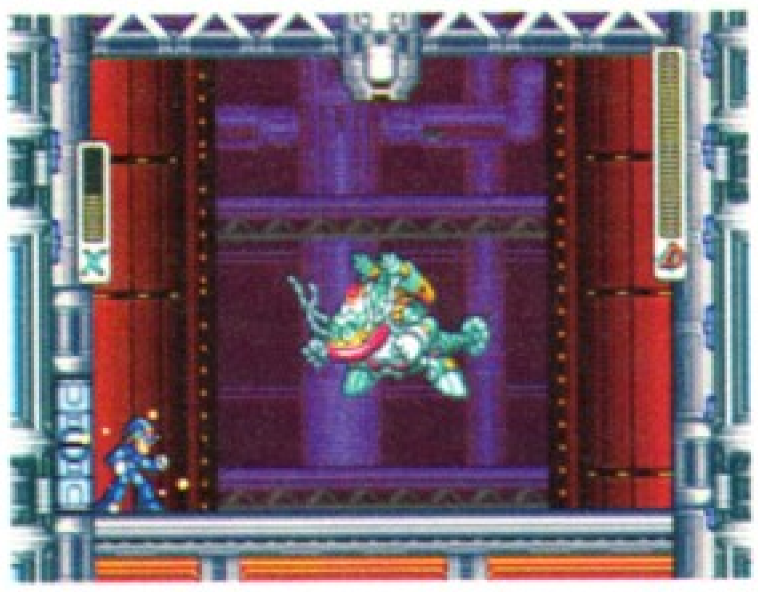


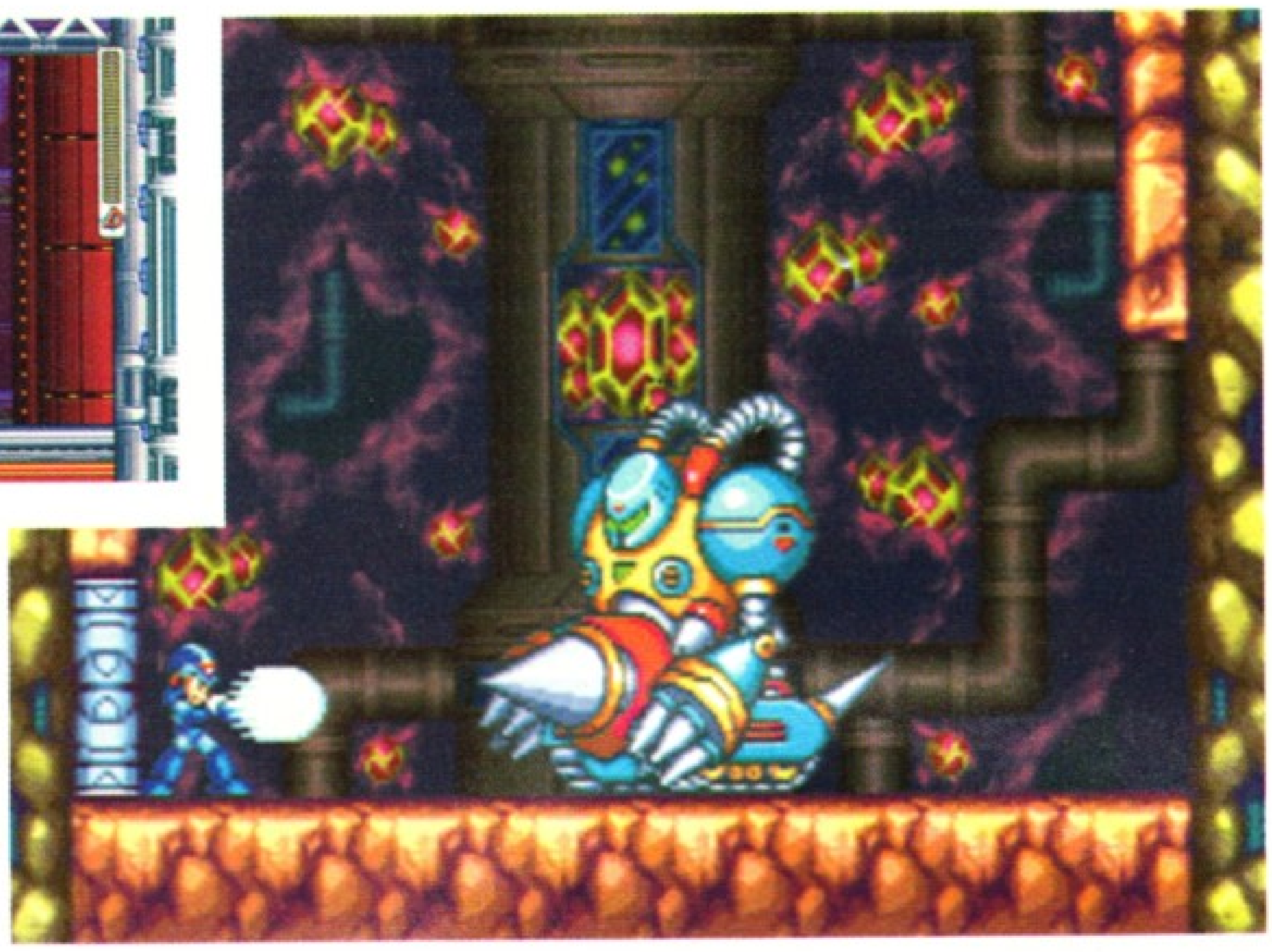


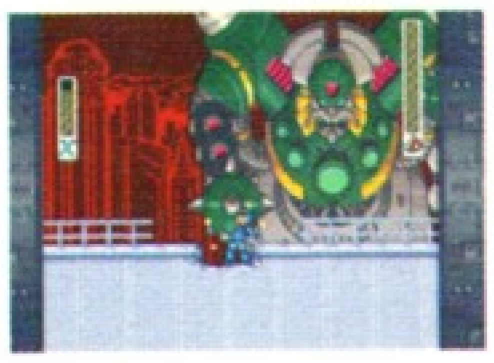
Regenerating enemies are a pain in the butt!



Complete the first stage and then tackle any of the eight remaining levels.







Memorize your enemies attack patterns and find their weak points.

While the 16-bit version of Megaman X3 was a competent platform shoot 'em up it's my sad duty to inform you that the Saturn game is a bit of a travesty.

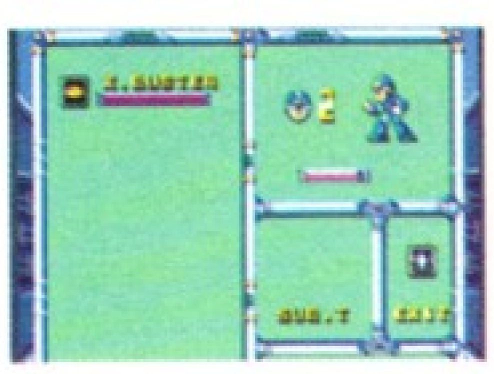
Players guide X through eight increasingly tough platform-based levels, blasting foes (with the aid of his powerful, arm-mounted X Buster cannon), dodging traps and attempting to make it safely to a rock-hard boss. Each boss then takes the offensive using a pre-determined attack pattern which must be memorised if X is to defeat them. Destroy a renegade robot and you're granted that Reploid's particular weapon. As with every single Megaman game, players are then able to access their accumulated weapons and use certain devices to dispatch specific foes. Once the first stage is completed, you're then free to tackle each level in any order. At certain points in the game players are allowed to switch between X and his partner, Zero. Despite the obvious wardrobe change, there's really very little to differentiate the two characters until special weapons and armour are collected. Completing the game is a challenge in itself but returning to each stage, discovering its secrets and then using those extra devices to open up other levels adds to the game's longevity.



The 32-bit version of X3 is basically a conversion of the Super NES game with a few new touches added to justify its leap to Saturn. Although identical to the original Super NES version, in terms of gameplay, animated intro sequences and new sound effects have also been added. These animated clips are presented in a classic Japanese anime style although the dubious quality of this footage unfortunately sets the low standard for the rest of the game. While the 16-bit version of Megaman X3 was a competent platform shoot-'em-up it's my sad duty to inform you that the Saturn game is a bit of a travesty. For a start there are obtrusive borders cropping the action. While that's certainly a familiar sight in most UK Saturn games, in Megaman X3 the screen is cropped vertically for some reason. Strangely enough the PAL PlayStation game only suffers from minimal black borders at the top and bottom of the screen. It's not as if the Saturn can't handle a few layers of parallax scrolling and a handful of 2D animated characters so why the screen reduction? As Megaman X3 is intended to generated interest among PSX and Saturn owners for a true next generation version of the series, why are there no truly innovative enhancements to what is essentially a straightforward 16-bit port? The real crime is that Virgin have decided to release this sham of a game instead of the glorious Technicolour platform delights of Megaman 8. As it is, this title is strictly for serious fans of the series only.

MATT YEO

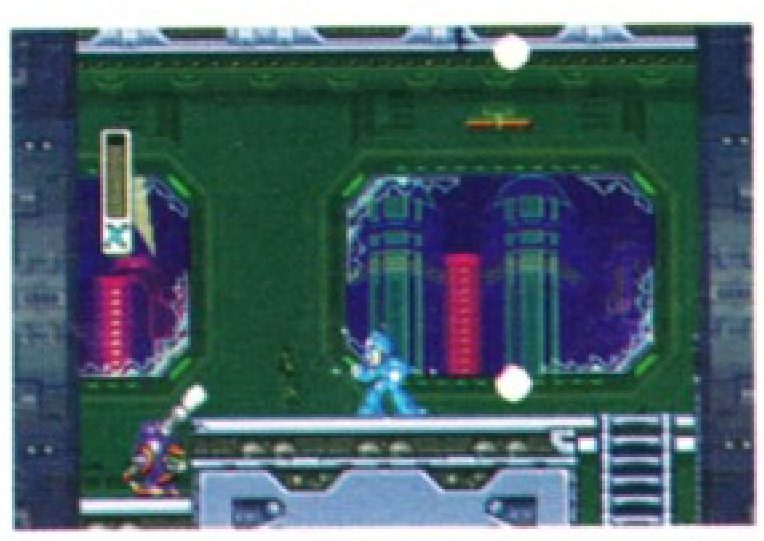




Defeating each boss is the key to gaining extra weapons.



Fans of the NES and SNES Megaman games will find X3 a real challenge.



Megaman powers up his X Buster, a powerful multi-shot weapon to aid him in his quest.

METAL HEADZ

With any Megaman game, fans are treated to a host of new boss characters each of which is equipped with a unique but devastating weapon. In the original series the likes of Bombman, Fireman, Spikeman and other colourful robots made their first appearance. For Megaman's next generation outing however, the bosses have undertaken animal-like characteristics and have ridiculous monickers...



BLAST HORNET
WEAPON: LASER CUTTER



BLIZZARD BUFFALO
WEAPON: ICE SHIELD



GRAVITY BEETLE
WEAPON: GRAVITY WHEEL



ACID SEAHORSE
WEAPON: ACID BUSTER



VOLT CATFISH
WEAPON: ELECTRO SPARK



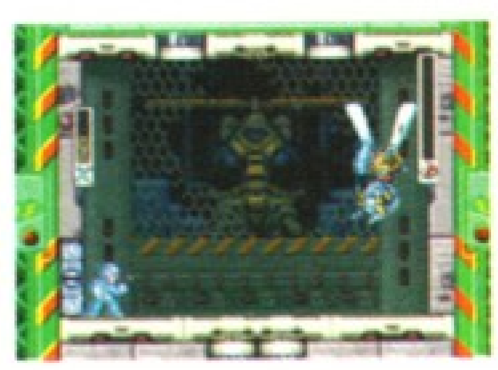
CRUSH CRAWFISH
WEAPON: SHOCK CANNON



TUNNEL RHINO
WEAPON: DRILL SHOT



NEON TIGER
WEAPON: PLASMA CLAWS





A disappointing Saturn conversion of a competent Super NES game. Poor cartoon sequences, sparse levels and appalling loading times make MMX3 one to avoid.

graphics	60
sound	58
playability	67
lastability	70
overall	66%

SEGA SATURN™ tips

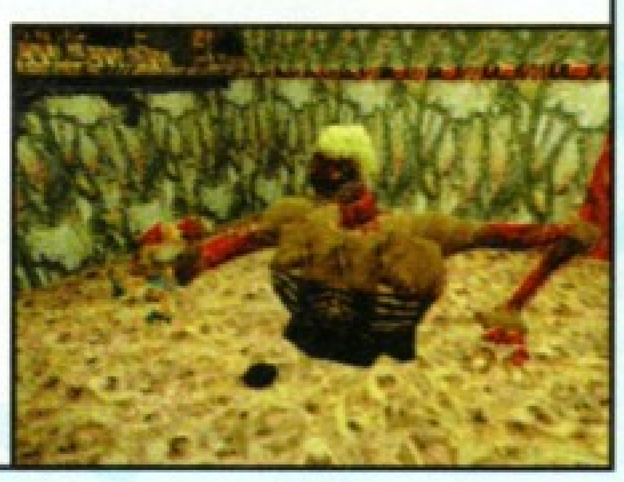
Due to circumstance beyond our control, this month's tips section has been produced by the lovely Phil Dawson, official office gopher and the only person on the face of the planet who has managed to take the concept of the plunge neckline and apply it to the back of his trousers. So if you're stuck with a game or you need just one more life for completing that oh-so tricky level, then you know where to come. Send in your top cheats, codes and hints to: TIPS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle Of Dogs, London, E14 9TX.

TOMB RAIDER

At last we have the first true Tomb Raider tip, and it's a beauty. This cheat allows you to skip to any level in the game. While playing, pause the game and go to your passport. Flip to the last page, then exit that page. Press **Z, Y, Z, X, X, X, Start** and you should hear a sound. Now use the exit page as if you were leaving the game. Instead of going back to the title screen, it should show you the screen for finishing that particular level.







SONIC 3D BLAST

After beating the game with all seven Chaos Emeralds, go to the Options screen and highlight "Start." A stage select will appear, giving you access to every stage.

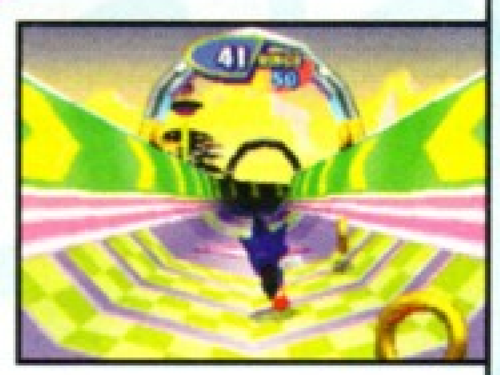
Stage Skip
While playing, press and hold either A, B, or C, and press Start.

Secret Code
At the Start screen, press **UP, RIGHT, A and C.** Then, while playing, pause the game and press any of the following:

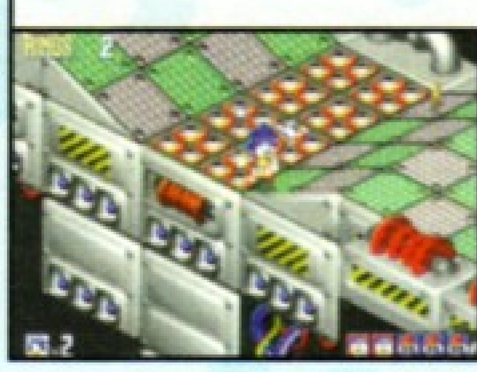
A - Skip one act.
B - Skip one level.
C - Skip to last level.
X - Gain a life.
Y - Gain a medal.
Z - Get all Chaos Emeralds.













There's actually a cheat to do all of this without finishing the game! See next month's SSM!

NBA JAM EXTREME

Here we have some new codes for NBA Jam Extreme. There are a lot more codes besides these to be found in the game so if you do find any then send them in.

Smiley Team
To get the Smiley team enter initials as MJT and enter the birthday as **March 22.**

All-Star Teams
Enter your initials as below:
All-Star East: (Team 1) **LMH June 28**, (Team 2) **EST March 14**
All-Star West: (Team 1) **WST July 12,** (Team 2) **RMC April 21**

Super Sports Team
At the initials screen enter **LAN September 10.**

Big Feet
At the Big Head screen, **hold Left** while selecting Yes or No.



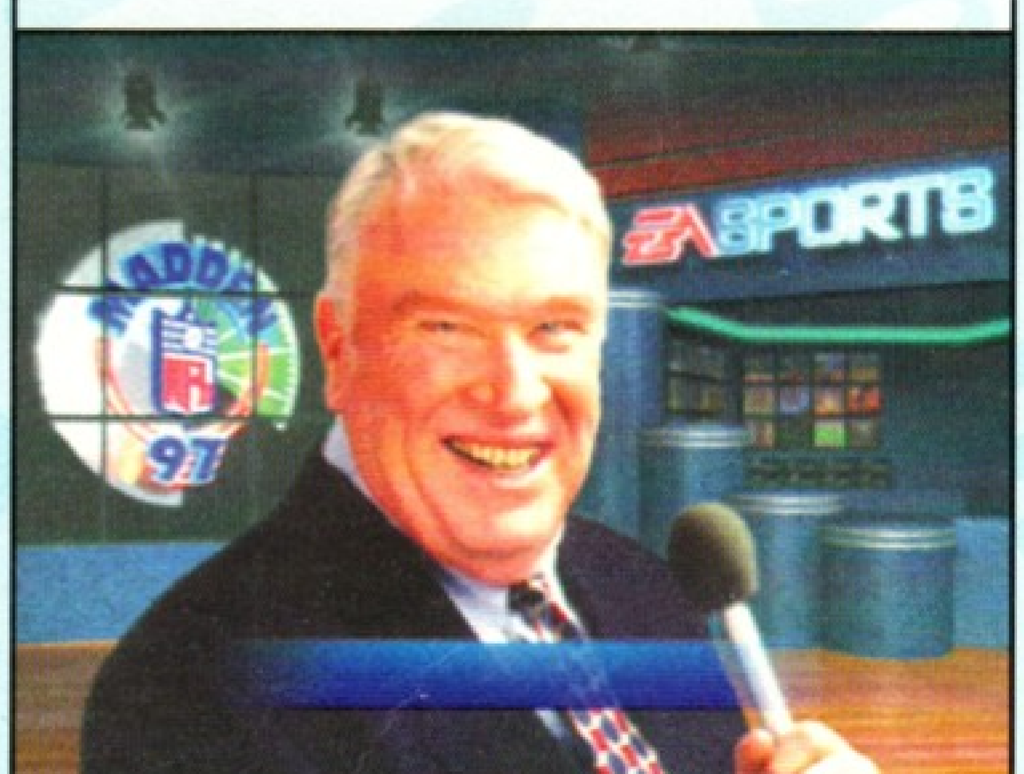
After the big head "hilarity" we're now treated to big feet. Please, no more, you're too funny. No, really.





JOHN MADDEN '97

To view the cinematic screens, press the L and R buttons on the title screen. Wait for the cut scenes to appear, then choose what video you wish to view.



Wow! Choose your own FMV bit! It's a dream come true!

VIRTUAL ON



Alternate Colours
At the Title screen, simultaneously press **UP, L, and R** to change the colour of your mech.

Different Camera Angles
While playing, press **X, Y, and Z** all at the same time to get different camera angles.

Select Jaguarandi (Easy Way)
At the Title screen, press **DOWN, L, and R** to select Jaguarandi.

Play as Jaguarandi
Beat Arcade mode on Hard, then at the Character Select screen, move to Raiden, push **RIGHT,** and you should be able to select Jaguarandi.

Ship Abduction
After beating the game, wait for the credits, and when they start to roll, move the control pad from **LEFT to RIGHT**. A tiny ball of light should shoot across the stars, and when your mech comes into view a ship will zoom by, take your mech, and fly to the blue planet with it.









Virtual On: a classic Saturn game that MUST be owned!



NiGHTS



When the SONIC TEAM logo appears on the screen, press **A, B, RIGHT, A, C, A, DOWN, A, B, RIGHT, A.** Next, at the title screen, press **UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, A + START.** Highlight any of Elliot's dreams, then press **X, Y, Z, Y, X, START.** Start the dream, pause your game, and press **RIGHT, A, LEFT, LEFT, Y, START.** Lastly, collect 50 crystals, and jump (or press **START** if you're NiGHTS). If entered correctly, a debug menu should appear.



Aha, the NiGHTS debug mode finally becomes available – at last! Let the ruination of this wonderous game begin!



COMMAND AND CONQUER



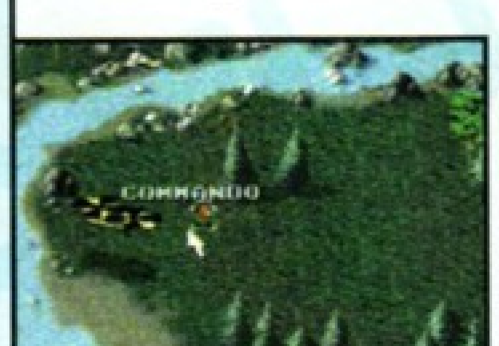
MISSION CODES
We've just received the mission codes for every level in this excellent game, so if you're having having hassles with some stages why not simply skip over them?

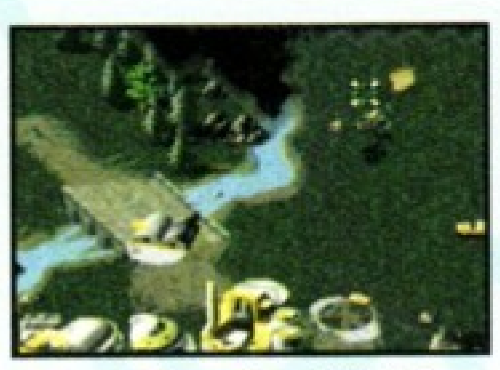
GDI: Global Defence Initiative

Mission 2:	OBK0S97W5
Mission 3:	A6MGEHM8T
Mission 4:	TGDD2AM6Z
Mission 5:	D89BJ1OAJ
Mission 6:	LCTL6D03P
Mission 7:	8KYJ6Q2CD
Mission 8:	OSKUUK6HX
Mission 9:	WW44HWIA3
Mission 10:	0ZWO53T3T
Mission 11:	WWMVVNVXP
Mission 12:	4L2RI96JQ
Mission 13:	4L299NJDW
Mission 14:	DQRUAZ58W
Mission 15:	UYV0XP63M
Mission 16:	EQRGN2JXS
Mission 17:	X0FJIEZ5F
Mission 18:	6M7UH52PM
Mission 19:	6M7C8JFJS
Mission 20:	WH0Q1Z401
Mission 21:	ODGYNAGT7
Mission 22:	4L29BWIAP
Mission 23:	K8APUCM0X
Mission 24:	SCUZHSYT3
Mission 25:	K8A733AM9

Brotherhood Of Nod

Mission 2:	WW44YSETB
Mission 3:	ZIE3P536D
Mission 4:	HPYBF3NEG
Mission 5:	BPH8RP2GF
Mission 6:	3LXGVRRNL
Mission 7:	8KGA2PCRK
Mission 8:	E5B0FWYER
Mission 9:	OTLT6IECJ
Mission 10:	MB34D8JPR
Mission 11:	0GERBWS3T
Mission 12:	WWMD4T00K
Mission 13:	SCUHO3BTQ
Mission 14:	ZG0WCIT3D
Mission 15:	RCG4YT5WJ
Mission 16:	K8SYXSKO5
Mission 17:	ZGINQUAJNO
Mission 18:	J8E3GNWHU
Mission 19:	K8APBKA8G
Mission 20:	C4QXXVM1M
Mission 21:	WF4S9X0ZW
Mission 22:	RXLAVC2DT
Mission 23:	Z15KIOE6Z
Mission 24:	VHDO2YPZ5

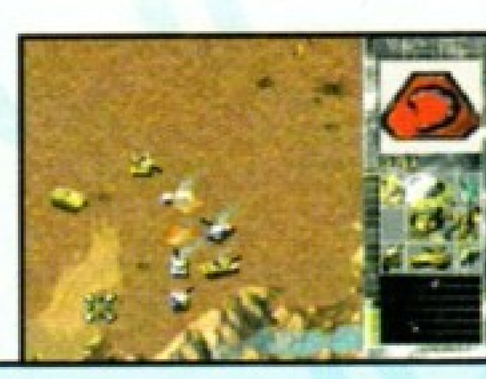




Well this list of codes should sort you out then, shouldn't it?







Die Hard Trilogy

Welcome to the first instalment of our Die Hard Trilogy players guide. Over the next three months we aim to bring you a definitive guide to all three games. The first being a blast fest in the Nakatomi building, secondly is a Virtua Gun-based blaster in the city airport and lastly we go for a merry drive in the city of New York. Written by PHIL DAWSON.

QUICK SAVE THE HOSTAGES

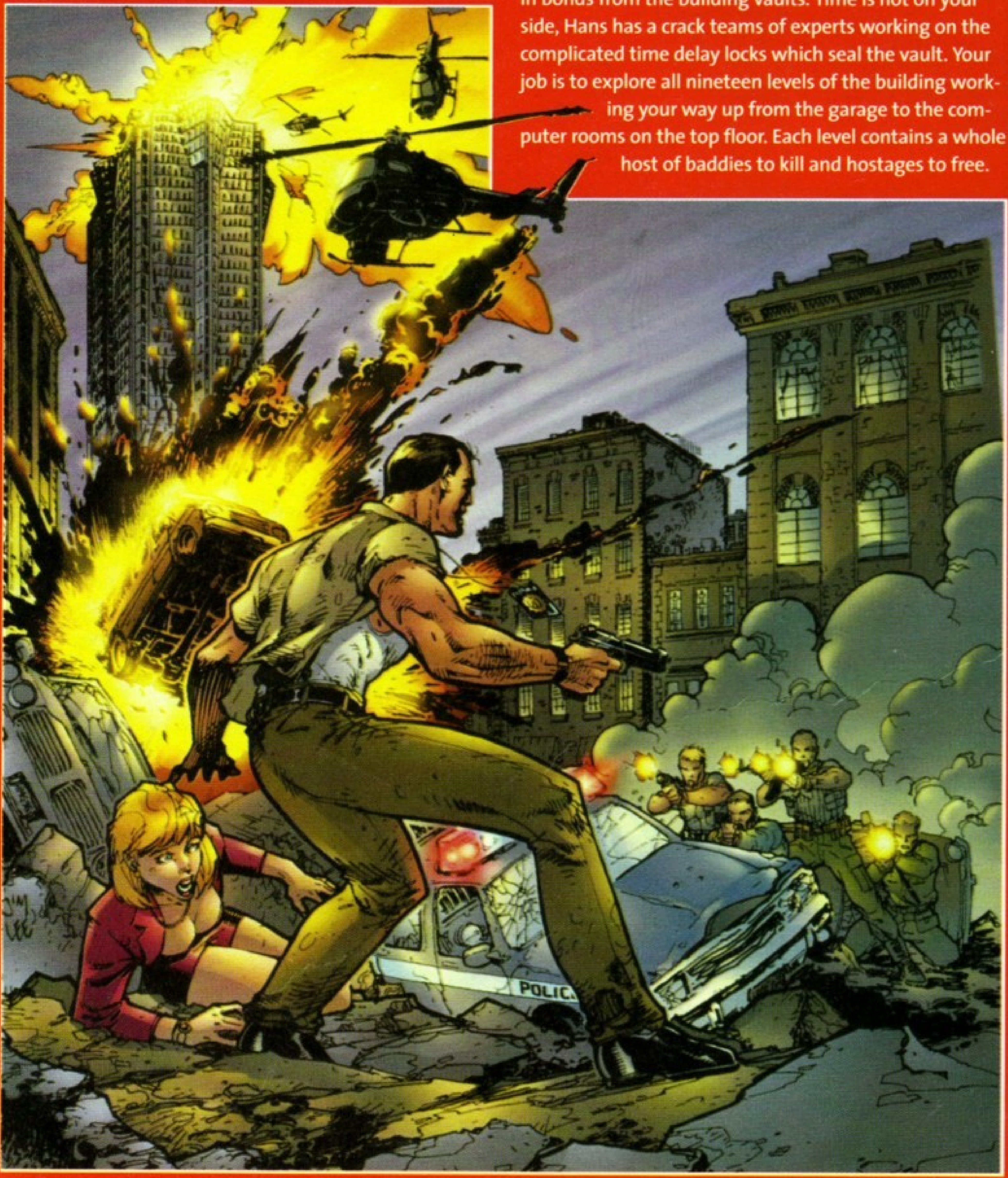
This month John McClane must save the hostages being held at the highly reputable Nakatomi building. The evil Hans Gruber is planning to rob millions of dollars' worth in bonds from the building vaults. Time is not on your side, Hans has a crack teams of experts working on the complicated time delay locks which seal the vault. Your job is to explore all nineteen levels of the building working your way up from the garage to the computer rooms on the top floor. Each level contains a whole host of baddies to kill and hostages to free.





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WEAPONS

1. HANDGUN Your primary weapon is an automatic handgun. Each clip contains thirty bullets. Surprisingly this is quite a good weapon, the rate of fire is quite good and the range isn't too bad either. The the down side is that it can only take out one person at a time, also it takes a while to reload leaving you open to fire. The only way to compensate for this is to watch your ammo counter. When you only have a few bullets left, take cover and fire them off so that a new clip is inserted ready for the enemy. Each enemy takes two hits.



ASSAULT RIFLE The Assault Rifle comes with two thirty round ammo clips and is capable of killing enemies with a single shot. Be careful when using this weapon as it is easy to get carried away and shoot off precious rounds. This is a rapid firing weapon and has got an uncanny ability to wipeout a group of enemies at a time. Use the side step buttons when firing to avoid enemy bullets.

2. MP5 MACHINE GUN This is more like it. Although it still takes two shots to kill an enemy, the rate of which it fires off rounds is extraordinary. When using this weapon, it's impossible to conserve ammo as it fires too quickly. The most effective way of using the MP5 is to charge at enemies, you'll kill them before they can lock onto you. Again this comes equipped with two thirty round clips.

3. M60 MACHINE GUN Whoa! We're playing with the big boys now. This huge beast is equipped with two





As you can see, the Die Hard weaponry does plenty of damage when used on terrorist scum!

thirty round clips like the others and drops enemies with a single shot. This doesn't fire a quickly as the Assault Rifle which is as good. The slow rate of fire means that ammo is saved. In theory if you do pick up this weapon a whole level could be completed just using this gun, just don't miss the target.

PUMP ACTION SHOTGUN Right hand over the cash or someone gets hurt! The Shotgun is excellent for taking down multiple targets. Each round fired spreads out, which means a group of two or three enemies can be killed at a time. It's not wise to use to open fire on enemies that are standing next to hostages as they will be killed as well. Also the reload time is slow so make sure you take cover. The best way of using the shotgun is to take cover behind a wall then use the roll button and open fire, then quickly roll back to safety.

4. EXPLOSIVE SHOTGUN Oh my gawdfathers, this is the kick ass weapon in the game. One shot can take out ten men. This awesome gun can take out enemies



from a long range and comes with thirty shells. Although this is a weapon of mass destruction, it also works against you if fired at a target close range. If fired at close range you'll lose a whole life, so be careful. If hostages are near the terrorist, well you can kiss them goodbye. Saving hostages from execution is impossible as well.

ANTI PERSONAL WEAPONS

GRENADE These babies can be found in crates around the building and in later levels they appear when a terrorist is killed. Grenades work the same way as an explosive shotgun but you have a chance to take cover. Grenades are most useful when thrown into a group of enemies.

5. STUN GRENADE The Stun Grenade stops terrorists cold. When thrown into a room, the green noxious gas spills out leaving all the baddies in its wake open to fire.





Getting the best out of the myriad weaponry is the key to success in the first Die Hard game.





6. SMOKE BOMB You won't find many of these throughout the game so when you have them, use them wisely. These work the same way as Stun Grenades - when throw the cannister spins around release yellow smoke. Any enemy that is in the vicinity of the canister freezes them, making them easy pickings.

OTHER HELPFUL ITEMS

7. HOT DOGS A Hot dog is one of America's most famous cuisine. Good job too, as it restores a small percentage of McClane's health.







8. GREEN MEDI PACK Green medi packs are able to restore half of McClane's health badge.

YELLOW MEDI PACK The yellow medi packs restore a whole life badge, which comes in very handy when McClane is approaching death. These packs are more common than Hot Dogs so you won't have trouble finding them.

9. BULLET PROOF VEST Once McClane obtains the vest he is rendered invincible. The health badge turns green indicating that the vest is on, then with every hit it changes colour. Once the badge turns yellow the vest has worn out.





With the aid of our point by point, level by level breakdown Die Hard shouldn't cause any problems.



THE RADAR

The radar displays the level layout, showing all walls and doors. The white arrow in the missile indicates which way you're facing. There are four different scales in which to view the map. Zoom four is the most magnified showing all corridors and rooms in great detail. Zoom one show nearly the whole map, this is the most useful as you can see where all the terrorists are located around the area. Different coloured dots appear on the radar, and these are as follows:



BLUE - Hostage / **RED** - Terrorist
PURPLE - Hostage about to be executed (If you save them, McClane receives a bonus life)
ORANGE - Hostage about to bite the big one, save them NOW!
YELLOW - Bonus item / **FLASHING RED** - Exit

BONUS GAMES

After every three levels completed, McClane is transported to the roof of the Nakatomi building. This is a bonus game, several hostages are trying to make their way to the helicopter on the roof. Your job is to eliminate all the terrorist blocking their path. Once all the hostages have made it to the chopper, the bomb will be activated and you'll have thirty seconds to reach the lift.





LEVEL 1

GARAGE The first level of the game and the easiest. The parking lot is a wide open space so finding the terrorists is no problem. Look out for the truck with its back doors open. Inside lies an Assault Rifle, MP5 Machine Gun and a green Medi Pack. Explore the top left hand corner because inside you'll find an explosive shotgun. The exit can be found in the centre of the garage.

LEVEL 2

RECEPTION McClane moves up a floor now. When you exit the lift, quickly roll right to the end of the corridor dodging the two terrorists. The reason for this is that



Death. Destruction. Large dollops of blood. And plenty of it on level two here.





when you start the level they appear behind you and shoot you before you have time to turn around. Make your way around the level disposing of the baddies then make your way back to the lift to find a machine gun. Also look out for the yellow medi pack by the exit in the upper left corner of the group of elevators.

LEVEL 3

CONSTRUCTION 1 If you like smashing things up, this is the level for you. You may notice that there aren't many doors in this level, so create some by shooting at the panes of glass and yellow boards. Almost the whole floor can be blown apart making it easy to find all the terrorists. Look out for the shotgun hidden in a box, as a boss needs to be killed later on. Towards the end of the level a boss appears from the lifts accompanied by his henchmen. Just throw a few grenades to finish the whole lot off, also look out for the MP5 that is dropped. The exit is located by the central elevators.



There's the boss. Kill! Destroy!



LEVEL 4

OFFICE 1 Run over to the far end of the level as soon as the stage begins, as there is an execution about to take place. Shoot the terrorist pointing a gun at the hostage to earn an extra life. Look out for the room containing four crates packed with bonuses. A yellow medi pack, machine gun, stun grenade and smoke canister are in these crates so make sure you find them.

LEVEL 5

MAINTENANCE 1 Quickly look for the a purple dot on the map and save the hostage to earn an extra life. Once the first group of enemies have been cleared and second batch arrive from the lifts. Each enemy killed drops a grenade so collect them all. As you progress through the maintenance area, trolleys appear from the lifts containing bonus items so have a look every once in a while, it's just one way to keep alive for longer.



LEVEL 6

COMPUTERS 1 One of the shorter levels in the game. Look out for the few bonus scattered around, these are mainly first aid supplies and grenades. Use the rooms for cover against enemy fire and shoot through the glass to pick off the terrorists as they walk by. The exit is found in the single lift in the corner of the map.





LEVEL 7

EXECUTIVE 1 Run towards the board room and take out the terrorists then free the remaining hostages. There maybe a execution if you wait around but it doesn't happen every time. If you see a purple dot on the rada, run like hell to gain an extra life. Look out for a shotgun hidden in one of the rooms near the elevators, as there is a boss to clear. Once the boss appears let him have it with a couple of grenades. The exit can be found at the other end of the board room.





Here we are in the boardroom on the Executive level of Nakatomi Plaza. As you might imagine, plenty of death follows.





LEVEL 8

CONSTRUCTION 2 On each side of the start elevator are two rooms. The right room contains a bullet proof vest and the other contain a machine gun. Both are very useful in this level as there are many terrorists that need to be brought down. The centre of the level contains many hostages lined up but watch out as it is an ambush. Many baddies are around the area and a lot of innocents will be caught in the cross fire.

LEVEL 9

OFFICE 2 Watch out for the hostage to the right as he turns out to be a disguised terrorist, so let him have it. Again shoot through the windows to kill the gunmen





who are hiding the offices. As soon as the large group of men emerge from the elevators, use a stun grenade and pick them off one by one. The exit can be found in the central lift area.

LEVEL 10

BALLROOM Many hostages are waiting to be rescued here, but alas many will be killed. Save as many as you can and try to draw the enemy fire away from the hostages by rolling into a safe area. Later on there will be an execution attempt in the far left corner. When you reach the hostage make sure the he does not get killed or you can kiss your extra life good bye.



Level ten, en route to the boardroom.

LEVEL 11

MAINTENANCE 2 A very easy level here. Head for the lift and drop a couple of bombs in front of the boss. Once killed you'll earn an extra life. Bring down the rest of his goons and head for the exit.









LEVEL 12

OFFICE 3 Look out for the crates ahead of you contain the machine gun and grenades. Run to the centre of the level and stop the execution to gain a life. Now run around the floor blasting the enemies and using the offices for cover. Make your way to the middle of the map to find the exit.

LEVEL 13

CONSTRUCTION 3 Straight away an execution is taking place in the centre of the level. The only problem is terrorists are stand on pillars above you, if you save the hostage he or she will die when they open fire. Shoot the gun men on the pillars first then drop down and save the hostage. If you do this quick enough you'll receive the extra life. the exit is situated in the furthest corner of the map.



LEVEL 14

VAULT Take out the large group of gun men by dropping one or two grenades then save the hostages behind them. Shoot the hostage as she leaves the life as she is a terrorist in disguise, then pick up the vest once she dead. The exit is found where you started the level.



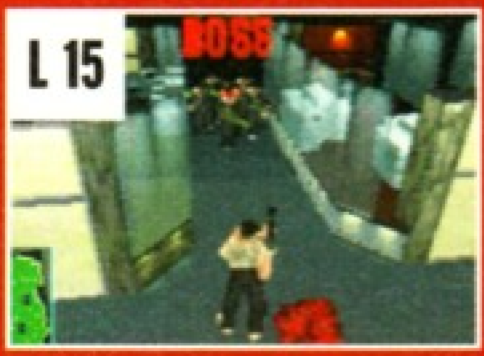
Power-up action in the vault.



The hostages are in trouble here.

LEVEL 15

COMPUTERS 2 Dangerous one this. Many of the terrorists are armed with shotguns, but lucky for you they drop them once shot. Use this to your advantage and shoot the large groups of gun men walking around the level. Look out for the execution later on a be carful not to shoot the hostage if you still have the shotgun. Quickly make your way back to the lifts to go to the next stage.





LEVEL 16

EXECUTIVE 2 Make your way to the boardroom and stop the execution. Now run around the level and kill the first set of terrorists. Once the second wave appears look out for another execution. Pick up any weapons the gunmen leave behind and wait at the lifts until the bomb arrives to exit.





Can you stop this horrifying execution? Well can you?



LEVEL 17

OFFICE 4 Look out for the gunmen with explosive shotguns here. Use the offices to take cover when they fire, then start shooting when they begin to reload. Luck for you they drop their guns, pick them up and you should receive one hundred and thirty rounds of ammunition











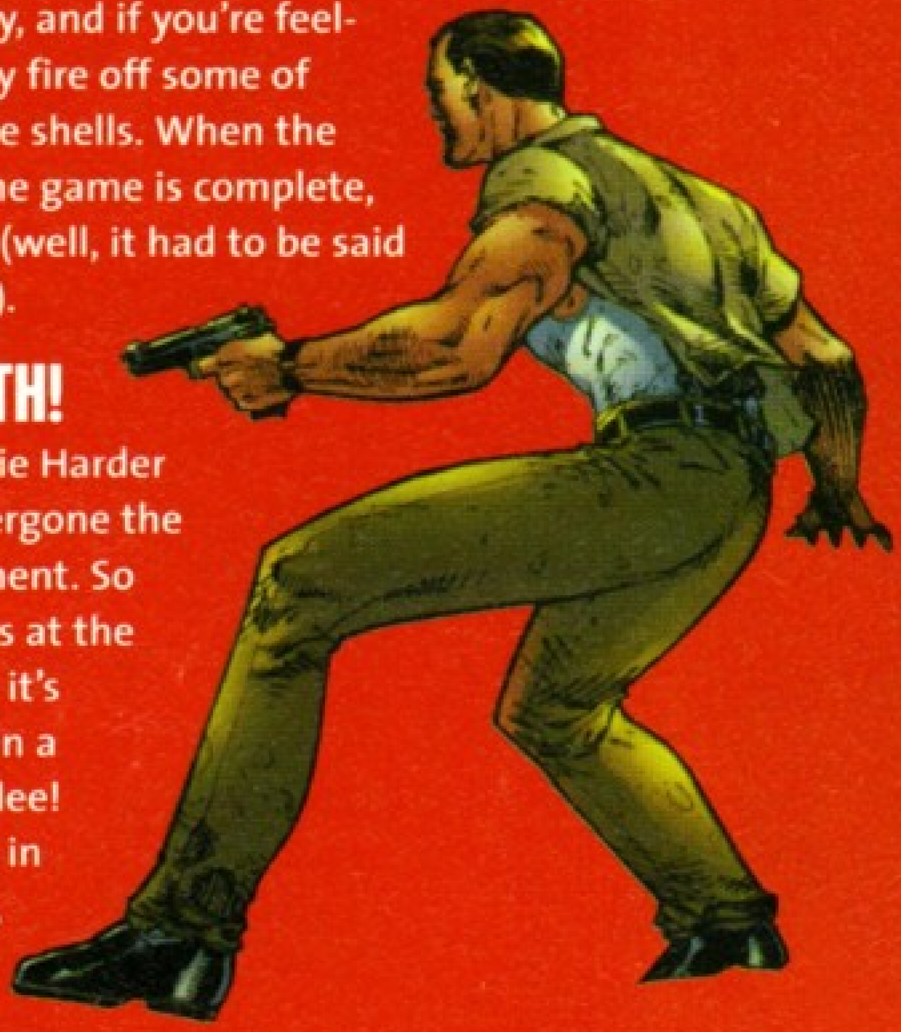
LEVEL 18

MAINTENANCE 3 There is an execution taking place at the start of the level. If you are still in possession of the explosive shotgun then there is no chance of getting the extra life. Just run around the level blasting away to finish off the terrorists. Don't get to cocky thou because if you fire a close range you'll lose a life. Head for the exit in the corner of the offices.



LEVEL 19

COMPUTERS 3 The last level is easy. Run through the corridors blasting anything that moves. There is wave upon wave of terrorists on this level so you should have fun. Once the boss appears drop the rest of your grenade supply, and if you're feeling really nasty fire off some of those explosive shells. When the boss is dead the game is complete, YIPPIE-KI-YAY! (well, it had to be said at some stage).



NEXT MONTH!

Next month Die Harder will have undergone the Cracker treatment. So have your guns at the ready because it's blasting time in a Virtua Cop stylee! Well, it will be in the next issue, any way.

Dark Savior

Welcome to the first instalment of the SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's Dark Savior coverage. This game from the creators of Megadrive Landstalker is an essential piece of Saturn gaming and simply demands purchase. Here we show off how to get through most of the game and point out how to avoid the main pitfalls of each parallel. This is yet another master's guide from the hands of DANIEL JEVONS. Enjoy!

THE PARALLEL SYSTEM

Depending on how you deal with the initial blazing ship scenario, the game takes place in one of five different parallel dimensions that totally change the events on Jailer's Island. Notice the timer in the corner of the screen. Completion of the level at different times takes you to different parallels.

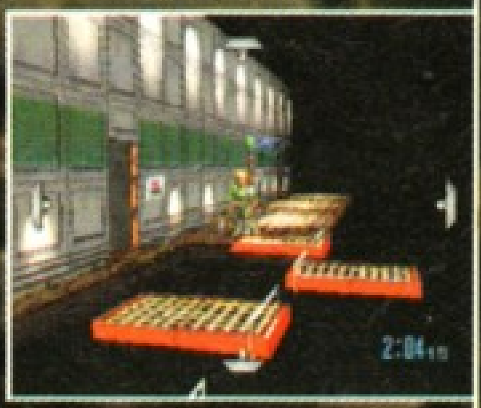
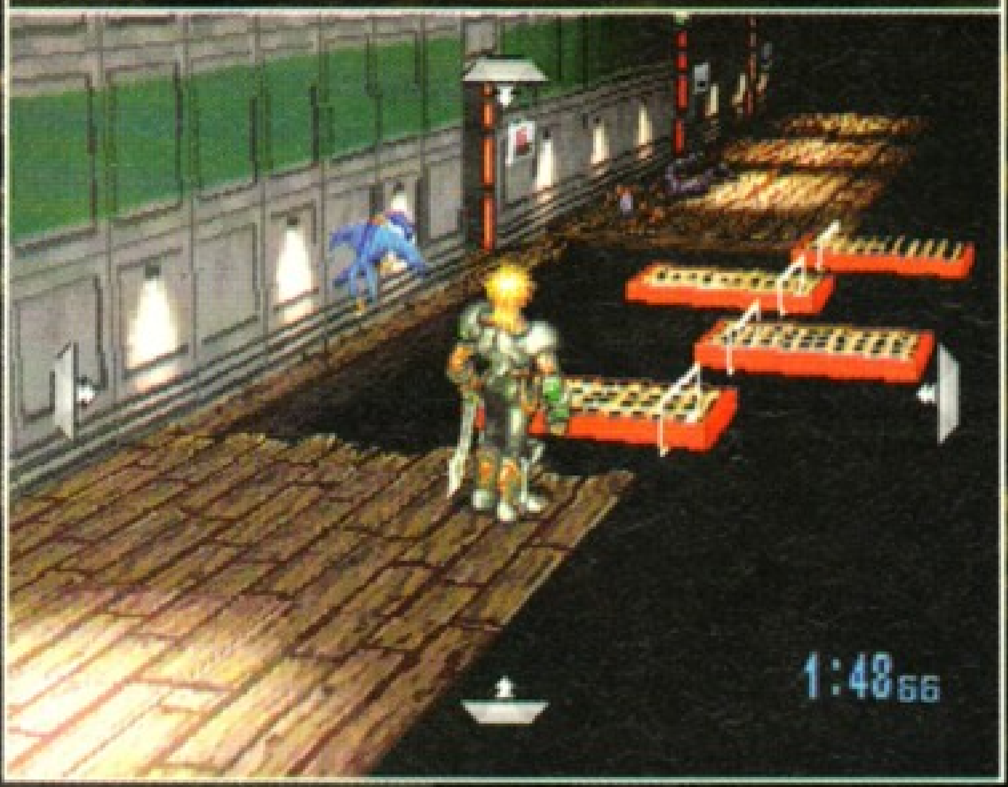
PARALLEL 1: Defeat F. Bilan after 4:30.
PARALLEL 2: Defeat Bilan between 3:30 and 4:30.
PARALLEL 3: Reach the captain's cabin before 3:30.
PARALLEL 4: Continues straight on from Parallel 3.
PARALLEL 5: Fight Bilan between 3:30 and 4:30, but deliberately lose.

In order to make it to the Captain's cabin in time for Parallel 3 and 4 it helps if you make use of the two major short cuts hidden around the boat.

SHORTCUT ONE

When you exit the room with what looks like a scaletrix track on the table go left and you will come across a series of sliding platforms. The platforms lets you skip a few rooms. Hmmm, that'll do for starters.



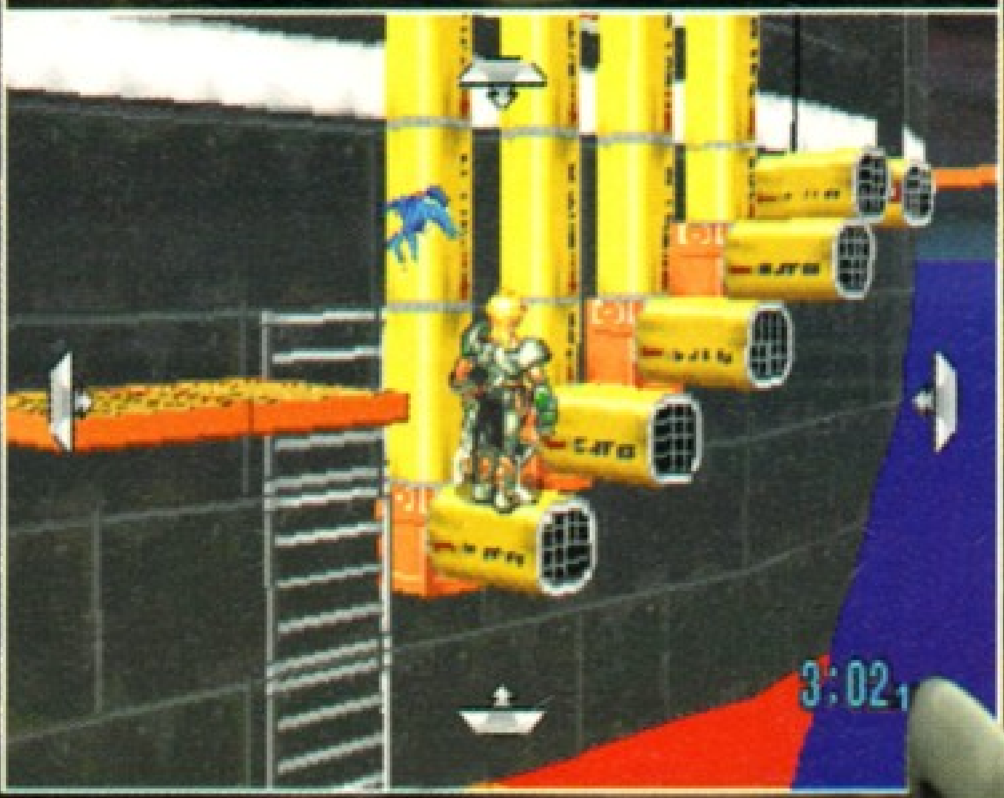




SHORTCUT TWO

In this chamber hit the box in the lower left hand çorner to reveal a hole in the floor. Drop down though the hole and follow the path outside the ship to cut a huge chunk out of your journey. Good eh?









The key to all the parallels is how quickly you get to this room – the confrontation with Bilan's clone.



PARALLEL ONE - A HUNT FOR THE EVIL

As you battle with Bilan's clone the real Bilan escapes the transport ship and heads towards Jailer's Island. By the time you reach the island Bilan is already on the loose, and Warden Kurtleigen has declared a state of emergency. Your mission in Parallel One is to hunt down and eliminate the villainous Bilan. But why would Bilan travel to the place where it was supposed be executed? You get the feeling that Kurtleigen isn't telling you everything...



ORDER OF EVENTS:

1. TOWN Search the town for hidden chocolate and make sure you get the Sword Power from Olivia (four pieces of choclate). You should already have some stocks left over from the boat. Fight one of the prisoners for the key to Death Valley, and travel to the JLO base.







2. JLO BASE Get the bottle from the lower right hand corner of the level, behind the crates. Talk to Bruno then take the open door into the castle.





3. WARDEN'S CASTLE Follow the beams into the castle. Carry Drizzit with you on the way out to receive a bonus. When you leave the castle follow the sewers back to the JLO camp.





4. MINES Take the second exit from the JLO camp. After a brief sewer section you will emerge in the mines. In the large mining room you will find the main power switch behind the prisoner's quarters. When you come to pour the acid, pour it on Lance.





5. CATACOMBS A series of basic puzzles: push the mummy into the coffin; put the rocks in the pots them jump in the last one; find a hidden room behind an unlit lamp near the stone lion; jump on the sand tornados and knock over the broken obelisks. It's not tough.





6. UNDERGROUND CITY Talk to all the people inside the various buildings. There is a hidden ladder in the top left hand corner of the town (behind the theatre) that lets you climb up onto the high walkway. In the room with the giant calculator look at the posters on the wall to work out the secret code.

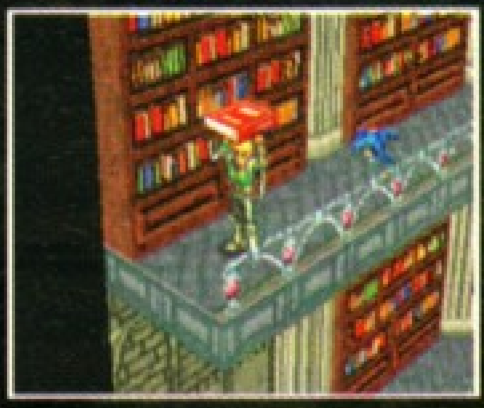






7. LABORATORY In the laboratory you fight Doc. Try to capture him as he's a handy ally. You can search around for the Doc and Warden's second diary, but they're not essential.





8. THREE TOWERS Ultimately you must ascend to the top of the bronze tower to do battle with the Parallel One final boss: M. Bilan. Just like ordinary Bilan, his weak spot is his back. Look at the battle tactics on the next spread for some tips.





PARALLEL TWO - A HUNT FOR THE HEART

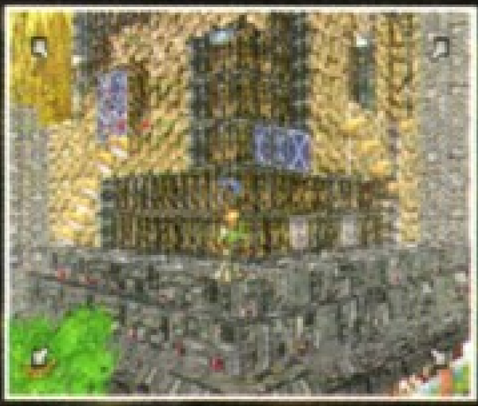
Garian defeats Bilan on the Transport ship, and is stunned to see that the person Bilan was in possession of was none other than his brother Luke! The only way that Garian can save Luke is to hunt for Wouda's diary, a legendary book that is said to be hidden somewhere on Jailer's Island.

ORDER OF EVENTS:

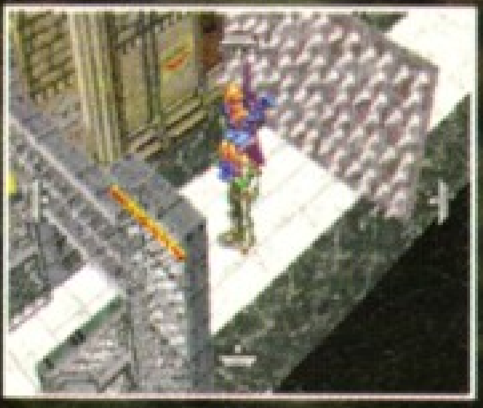
1. TOWN Warden Kurtleigen meets Garian in the bar and opens the door to Death Valley for you. Everything is in the same location as Parallel One except Olivia is missing.



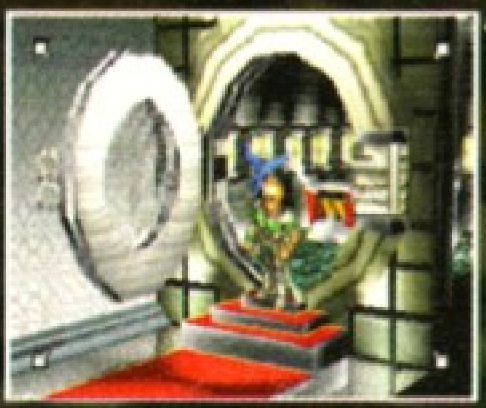

2. JLO BASE Bruno tries to convince you that Kurtliegen is corrupt. You agree to listen to him and follow Drizzit into the castle to see proof.

3. WARDEN'S CASTLE While in the castle Drizzit falls into the toxic vat and becomes a monster. Carry Kay out of the castle to win her over.

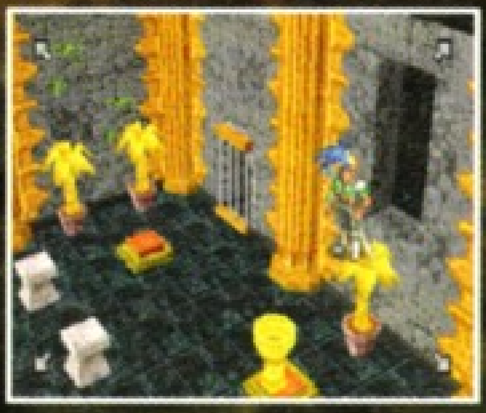



4. KURTLIEGEN'S MANSION Solve the circuit board puzzle to reach the vault and get the diary of Wouda. But watch out for the lasers on the way out. They're harmful, but not fatal.

5. MINES The first of the two mine cart sections. This one is relatively easy. Learn when to switch between the inner and outer views.




These two shots above might come in handy if you don't want to waste time solving the puzzles for yourself.



6. CATACOMBS Thankfully, the catacombs are already completed. After giving Kurtliegen the diary in exchange for Kay, you must go back a room to free Kay's sister, Tracy.




7. UNDERGROUND CITY The calculator room is broken, and you must exit the city the way you came.




8. THREE TOWERS You must enter each of the towers to get the three rings, Copper, Gold and finally Silver. Copper and Gold are obtained by beating the two statues of the same name. Silver is actually Kay, and she transforms into fire Kay to fight the last boss, Drizzit.



Fortunately this polygon monstrosity transforms into a much more beatable 2D mutant sprite. Good thing tOo eh?

PARALLEL THREE - A HUNT FOR THE LIES

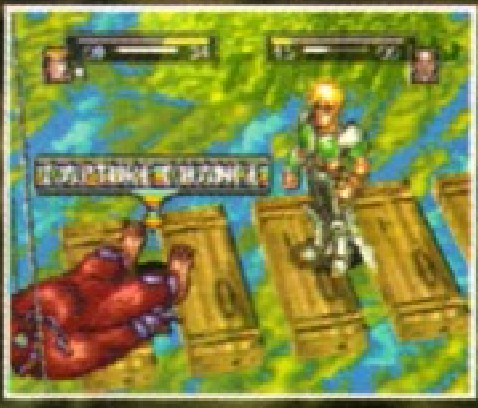
Garian reaches the captain's cabin before Bilan, and Bilan escapes from the ship. Garian chases after Bilan to Jailer's Island, just like the first parallel, but this time things are going to happen a little differently. Bilan arrives near the JLO base and Bruno goes to strike a deal. Big mistake.

ORDER OF EVENTS:

1. TOWN The incident with the young boy has greater significance in this parallel, though you don't know it yet. Once again Kurtliegen approaches you to find the secret JLO base.



2. JLO BASE The JLO base has already been destroyed by Bilan when you arrive. Remember to collect the bottle.




3. MINES You follow Bilan into the mines. After the second (and more difficult) mine cart section (you have the use the in-cart view more often) you find and defeat Bilan. But Kurtliegen leads you onto the Carbon Floor where a surprise awaits.




4. CARBON FLOOR J.J. initiates plan D and thaws all of the carbon frozen criminals, including... you!! But how can you be in two places at once?!? The answer lies in the fourth parallel...




PARALLEL FOUR - A HUNT FOR THE TRUTH

The clock is turned back to when Garian first left for Jailor's island. Back on the mainland his bounty hunter friends pick up the distress signal sent from the transport ship and decide to come to your rescue. Meanwhile, Garian is arrested for murdering the young boy in the town and is sentenced to death by Carbon Freeze? What's going on!?

ORDER OF EVENTS:

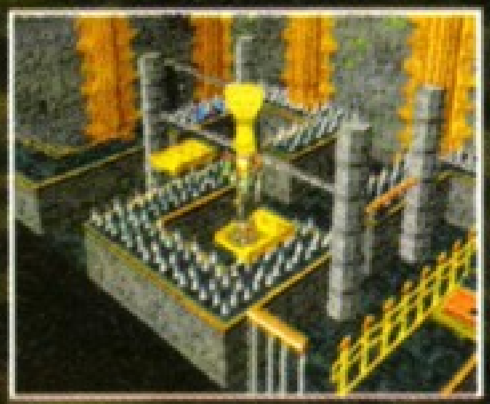
1. CARBON FLOOR Jack explains the concept of parallel dimensions. Two parallels have collided and now you have to fight for your existence against an evil Carbon Garian. You have exactly one hour to complete all three towers, rescue your friends and escape the island. No mean feat!



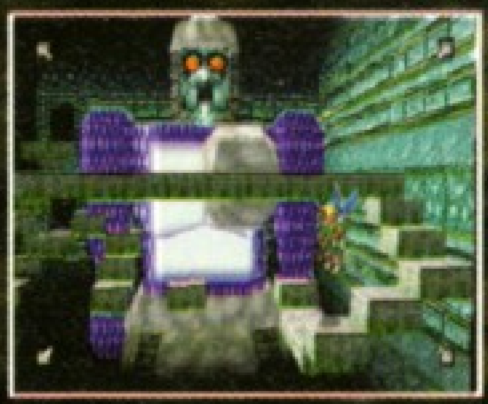
2. SILVER TOWER Things kick off atop the silver tower with an epic assault course. It takes a lot of patience to get through it fast, so keep practicing. You have to be quick if you want to save your friends.




3. GOLD TOWER You should be familiar with the puzzles in the Gold Tower by now. Be careful not to die, as you can't save throughout the entire parallel and death means restarting.




4. BRONZE TOWER A lot easier than the Gold and Silver tower that's for sure. On your way back down you can fall off the ledge to re-start at the lower entrance to that screen.




5. DEATH VALLEY If you do the three towers fast enough you'll rescue all of your friends (including Kay) before the final battle. After fighting Meg you return to the town to fight Carbon Garian. Defeat him and you've got 90 seconds to make it to the docks. Hurry!!!




This here shows the final confrontation between the hero, Garian, and his evil twin (and your worst nightmare), Carbon Garian. Destroy him!

PARALLEL FIVE - THE MARATHON OF DEATH

This isn't really a proper parallel as such, more an endurance test. After loosing to Bilan you are taken to an arena where you must face off against 10 different opponents, one after the other. Mushai, Indigo, Kurtliegen, Bruno, Bilan, De Bose, Blade, Meg, Sean and M.Bilan. The catch is, you only have two energy bars to fight all of them! Here are some fighting tips to help you out.

DARK SAVIOR BATTLE TACTICS:

1. THE DASH ATTACK The dashing attack is the most effective attack in the game. Hold down run, charge towards your opponent and press attack. It does a lot of damage, and normally knocks your foe to the ground.





2. SPECIAL ATTACK When close to an opponent, hold down run and press AWAY and attack. For Garian this move is a spin kick, but it varies from character to character. It also counts as a finishing move in the point tally.




3. EXCHANGE Make sure you are touching your opponent then press towards and attack. You will swap places with them, giving you a chance for a damaging back attack. To be honest, it's hard to pull off and probably not worth the risk.



4. SUPER ATTACK The charged super attack always does the most damage, and if you can finish an opponent with it, you'll get a special Finish point bonus. Unfortunately, you can be stopped in your tracks with a single hit, so make sure you time it well.





TRICKS

TWO PLAYER Vs MODE

Once you have completed all five parallels (and have the game position saved) load the game and access the fifth parallel as per normal. This time however, plug in a second control pad and a second player will take control of Garian's enemy!! Cool! Just make sure Garian wins or you'll have to do it all again.

KEYBOARD

In the sound test hold down X, Y and Z while a music track plays to see the notes represented on a keyboard. Just for all you budding musicians out there, who want to learn the tune.

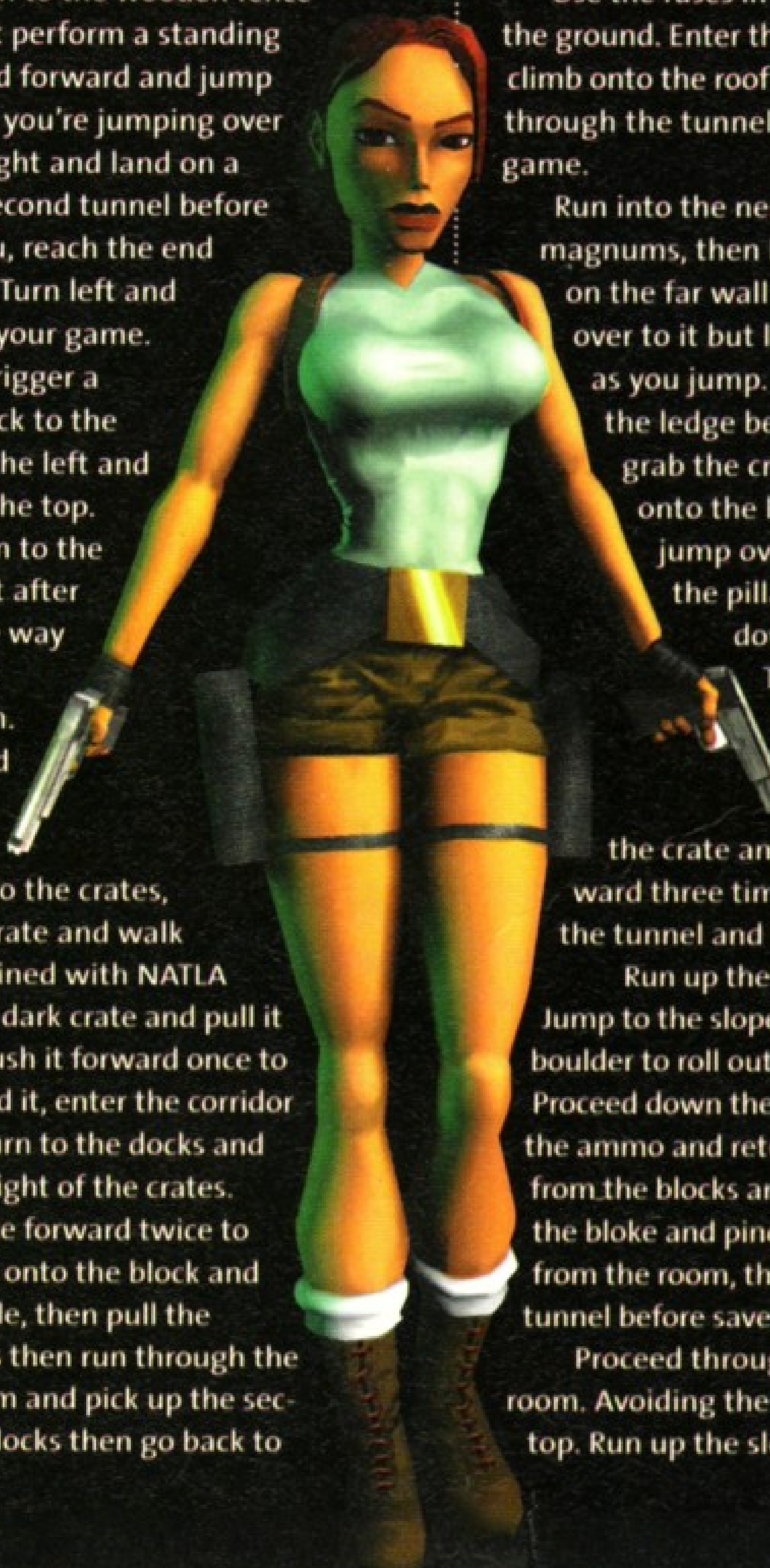
Tomb Raider PART 3

Here we are the final episode of what has become a pretty vast Tomb Raider complete solution. This is indeed part three - the last bit - where we take you from the terrors of the Natlas Mines right through to the game's incredible, action-filled conclusion. Now we join LEE NUTTER as he continues his exhaustive coverage of this stunning title.

NATLAS MINES

Swim into the tunnel until you see a waterfall on your right, climb out behind the waterfall and follow the path and pull the lever. Run to the waterfall and jump in before pulling yourself on the left side of the boat. Run forward and pull the block back once, go around the corner and climb up onto the large mound. Jump over to the tunnel behind the block and follow the path and pull the switch. Return to the waterfall, follow the path behind it and climb the sloped path. Jump over to the ledge with a road sign and follow the tunnel into a large room with a glass structure. Grab the medipack and run into the next room. Pull the block back toward the tires and climb onto the block. Jump onto the cabin roof and walk onto the collapsing tire to fall inside. Run through the tunnel and activate the switch in the alcove to move the boat back by the docking area. Go to the end of the tunnel and slide to the edge on the right, grab the ledge and drop to the ground. Run down the tracks through the wooden door, walk towards the first hurdle until a boulder rolls from left to right. Return to the wooden fence and with your back to it perform a standing jump forward, then hold forward and jump over the hurdles. When you're jumping over the third hurdle, turn right and land on a hill. Run through the second tunnel before the boulder flattens you, reach the end and grab the first Fuse. Turn left and use the beacon to save your game.

Run up until you trigger a rolling boulder, then back to the left. Run up the hill on the left and drop down the hole at the top. Climb the hill and return to the cabin chamber. Turn left after you land and run all the way back up the path to the ledge with the road sign. Jump into the water and climb up onto the dark section of the boat.
Jump across the water to the crates, climb onto the far left crate and walk behind it into a tunnel lined with NATLA crates. Walk over to the dark crate and pull it backwards once. Now push it forward once to find another crate behind it, enter the corridor and pull the switch. Return to the docks and enter the tunnel to the right of the crates. Push another NATLA crate forward twice to enter a new room, climb onto the block and climb up through the hole, then pull the level. Collect the uzi clips then run through the tunnel into the next room and pick up the second fuse. Return to the docks then go back to the cabin chamber behind the waterfall. Enter the doorway to the left of the left-hand cabin, run through the tunnel until it starts to fork off. Take the left path, pull the switch then return to the fork. Pick up the third Fuse, run back to the room with the glass structure and enter from the right. Pick up the magnum clips and save at the beacon.



Use the fuses in the holes to lower the cabin to the ground. Enter the cabin and retrieve the pistols, climb onto the roof and jump over to the tunnel. Run through the tunnel and drop down to save your game.

Run into the next room blasting and retrieve the magnums, then line yourself up with the switch on the far wall and perform a running jump over to it but let go of the jump button as soon as you jump. You'll fall down the cliff and grab the ledge below. As Lara slides down the cliff grab the crevice and edge to the right. Drop onto the ledge in the lava, turn left and jump over to the pillar. Continue across the pillars to the tunnel entrance, drop down and run into the room with TNT crates. Pull the dark crate away from the wall, then pull it three times from the right side into the next room. Climb over the crate and push it from the other side forward three times. Climb onto the crate, jump to the tunnel and save your position.

Run up the hill and climb onto the ledge. Jump to the sloped ledge on the right, wait for the boulder to roll out from the tunnel and jump over it. Proceed down the tunnel and pull the switch, grab the ammo and return to the TNT room. Turn left from the blocks and enter the hole in the wall, kill the bloke and pinch his uzis. Collect the uzi clips from the room, then run up the hill and enter the tunnel before save your game.

Proceed through the tunnel and enter the next room. Avoiding the boulders, work your way to the top. Run up the slope and climb to the next room and onto the lowest pillar before leaping over to the highest column. Jump straight up and pull yourself up to the ledge, turn left and jump across. Turn left again and jump across one more time. Push the block twice, turn right and climb up to the next room. Push the second block twice and drop down into a lower room. Pull the block that you find once and go back through the upper room. Drop back into the lower room on the other side of the lower block. Push the block forward,





Opposite Lara you'll see a waterfall which conceals a tunnel behind it. Follow it round to activate the first lever. Then go to the room to the left of Lara to find the movable block.











A mine cart scene reminiscent of the Indiana Jones films. In fact, that's not the only similarity either.

turn left into a new alcove, then go forth and save your game or reap the consequences.

From the save beacon, pull the switch and turn so that the switch is to your right. Run into the alcove, turn left and climb up. Run forward to the block and enter the tunnel to the left. Push the block at the bottom of the stairs forward once, turn left and run like mad towards the door. Activate the switch next door and run back up the stairs, run forward to a hole in the floor and drop down. Run through both doors, shoot the guard using the magnums and grab the shotgun from him when he dies. Climb up to the top of the pyramid and when you reach the top, turn left and jump against the wall. Go into the tunnel and activate the switch at the end, go back to the bottom of the pyramid and run through the maze building to the Gold Door. Enter the door, retrieve the medipack and pyramid key to open the pyramid doors and make your exit.

SECRETS

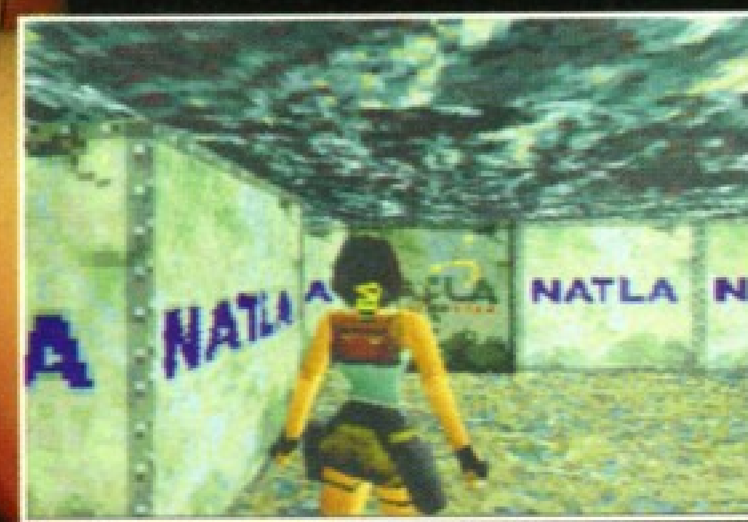
1. From the second save beacon, use the fuses in the holes to lower the cabin and enter it, collect the pistols then climb up onto the roof of the cabin and leap across into the tunnel. Jump up to the ledge and run forward to open a gate elsewhere. When you come to a plank on the ground, turn around and jump backwards and slide down whilst holding the action button. Lara will grab onto the edge of the hole that opens below you and not fall into the lava. Once the plank closes up, move to the wall and climb up the wall then up onto the next ledge into the secret area where you'll find a shotgun and some ammo.

2. From the third save point, run into the next room and collect the magnums. Replenish your health, then line yourself up with the switch on the far wall. Make a running jump over to it but let go of the jump button as soon as you jump. You'll fall down the cliff and grab onto the ledge below. As you slide down the cliff, grab the crevice and shuffle to the right. Drop onto the ledge and turn right, run through the tunnel to a lava filled chamber and jump to the ledge in the lava. Turn left and make a jump to the next pillar then bound over to the next column. Turn right and leap across to the tunnel entrance, immediately run forward and push the crate before Lara gets squashed. Pull the same block out again then climb onto it. Leap over to the secret area and collect the medipack and ammo.

3. From the fourth save point, run up the hill and climb to the ledge. Jump over to the sloped ledge to the right. Wait for a boulder to roll out of the tunnel, then jump over to it. Follow the tunnel and activate the switch, grab the ammo and return to the TNT room. Turn left from the blocks and enter the new hole in the wall. Take out the skate boarder and take the uzis from him. Collect the three ammo from the room, then find the hole in the ground with water and dive in. Follow the tunnel through the gate and enter the secret area.





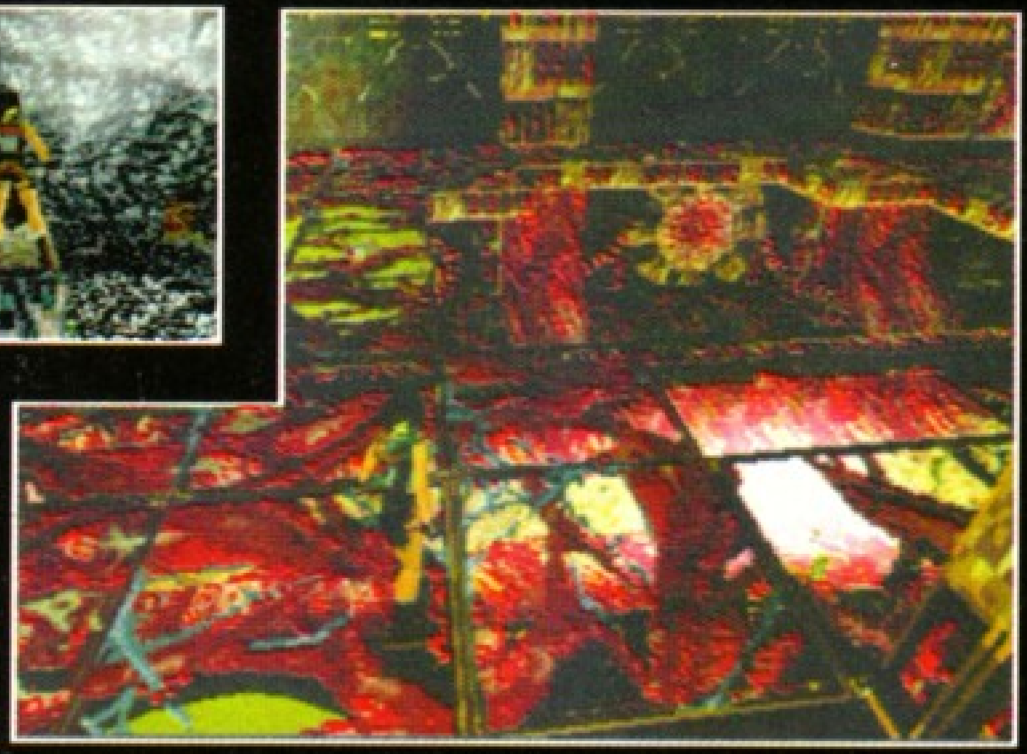


(Top) Leap over the hurdles and avoid the boulder to take Lara to relative safety. (Bottom) The darker crate in front of Lara is movable and may reveal a hidden tunnel.









ATLANTIS

From the start, run forward and the first sphere on your left will explode. Shoot the creature that comes out. Turn around and walk toward the sphere on the right, and kill the monster. Run forward along the trench and a third sphere will explode, kill the creature as you did the rest. Face the centre door and turn left, run through the side door and climb the stairs toward the webbed floor. Dash over the central bridge and grab the ammo. Draw your weapon and dispose of the flying demon, then run into the far right corner of the webbed floor. Enter the alcove and activate the switch, turn around and run forward into another alcove. Activate the second switch, run back to the other side of the room and enter a new doorway. Proceed down the steps and hit the third switch, return to the entrance and walk through the central door. Shoot the flying demon then run forward and drop down into the hole and move into the hallway. Turn to face the crevice in the wall and jump over to it, edge to the left and drop down to the tunnel. Grab the ledge and climb up, run into the tunnel and activate the switch, continue forward and grab the ammo for the uzi. Leap across to the webbed floor, walk to the edge of the ledge and jump over to the next ledge. Climb up and run down the tunnel to save your position.

From the beacon, jump to the pillar, turn left and jump to the lowest ledge on the pyramid slope. Quickly jump to the next ledge, turn right and jump to a third ledge and slide down. Keep sliding down to the red door, turn so the door is on your left and jump across to the ledge. Face right and leap over to find a medipack. Run and jump to the highest ledge and pull yourself up, walk into the tunnel to find some uzi ammo. Pull the switch and return to the entrance, jump into the water and pull the sunken switch. Climb out of the water to the left of the slope and get onto the pillar. Jump across the pyramid and enter the red door before it closes. Jump across to the far ledge and haul yourself up, climb the stairs and jump into the doorway at the top before saving the game.

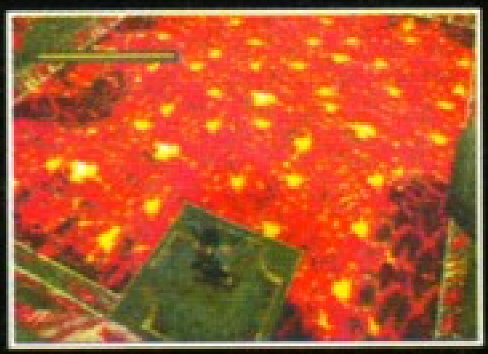
From the second save point, climb up the tunnel and over the spiked pit and jump into the water. Retrieve the ammo and pull the switch, swim through the open door and rise to the surface. Climb up and run past the slicers, pick up the uzi ammo and turn right. Jump across to the next ledge, run into the tunnel and turn around. Dispose of the demon and collect the ammo, then turn around and dive into the pool. Climb out of the water between the two large spheres, turn right and activate the switch, run left and around the corner, pull a second switch in the alcove and go and save your game.

Run toward the sphere in the right-hand corner and shoot the demon. Activate the final switch to open all three doors underwater. Dive into the water and swim through the tunnel. Climb up to the ledge and enter the tunnel, turn left near the dark wall and

(Above) The webbed floor room has some flying demons within so you'd better get those uzis ready. (Below) To reach the door on the right jump across the yellow ledge within the time limit.







Be careful not to plunge to the ground as a fiery death awaits those who do. Instead jump to the ledge to the right of where Lara is stood.



To either side of Lara you'll notice some yellow pods. Walk near them and they explode revealing a flying demon, so uzis at the ready.



At the flick of a switch the room becomes filled with red hot lava. Obviously you can't walk across it, but the platforms are conveniently placed for you to reach the other side.



At the far side of the room is a save beacon which can be retrieved by following the ledge to the right of where Lara is .



run up the hill. Turn right at the red hallway and move toward the red door, pull the switch to open the door. Grab the ammo and run to the wall opposite the large boulder. Pull the block back once, then push it forward from the right up against the wall. Return through the red hallway to the switch again. Pull it again and enter the red door. Move forwards past the block, enter the tunnel and shoot the demon, now walk into the adjacent room. Run and jump across the ledge on the right before saving your position.

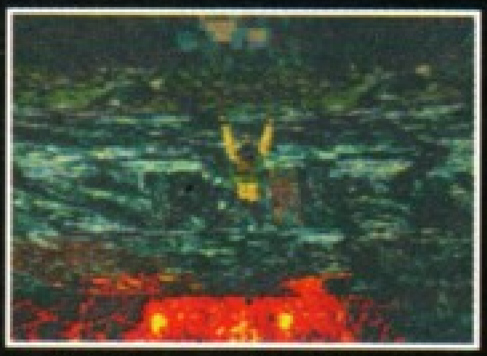
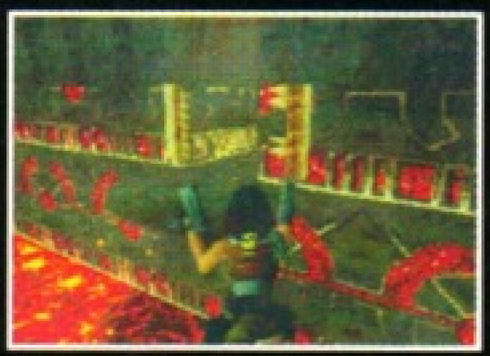
Proceed around the corner and kill the two demons. Slide down the slope and jump over to the red ledge before you fall onto the spike trap and take the medipack and ammo. Now run through the tunnel into the next room, turn right and shoot the demon. Run and jump over to the ledge on the left, walk to the right side of the ledge and position yourself so Laras feet just about touch the dark triangle. Run and jump across to the small ledge, quickly turn and run into the tunnel and kill the demon. Leap over to the dirt coloured slope on the red bridge in the middle of the room. Jump to the ledge against the rocky wall, turn right and take the ammo before activating the switch. Turn around and run forward to a small narrow ledge, run across the ledge to a block.

Pull the block backwards out of the wall to find a tunnel, now quickly run past the slicer. Turn right and shoot the two demons, jump across to where the demons were and run up the tunnel. Collect the ammo and medipack, turn right and walk out onto the ledge. Shoot the creature and jump across to the next platform. Make your way to the end of the tunnel and save your position.

Jump to the ledge in the corner and pull the switch, return to the lava room and jump back to the entrance ledge. Turn left and jump to the pillar, turn left and jump to the column. Turn left and jump to the second pillar, now leap across to the doorway in the wall. Climb up and pull the switch at the end of the tunnel. Return to the tunnel entrance and jump to the left pillar, leap across the pillars and enter the tunnel. Follow the tunnel into a long hallway, turn left and enter the red tunnel. Run past the red door and wait for it to close. Climb up into the tunnel above the door, run to the end and jump onto the ledge to the right. Pick up the ammo and run into the tunnel. Shoot the creature and take some



By now you are at the penultimate level so there's not all that far to go. Little did you realise when you first purchased Tomb Raider what a massive and compelling task you were undertaking. This game is for life and definitely not just for Christmas.

(Left) Lara ponders how to reach the tunnel without falling.

more ammo. Move forward and stand at the bottom of the ramp, run ahead and stop on the tile before the slicer. Jump left to avoid the boulder and walk up the rest of the ramp, enter the door and save your game.

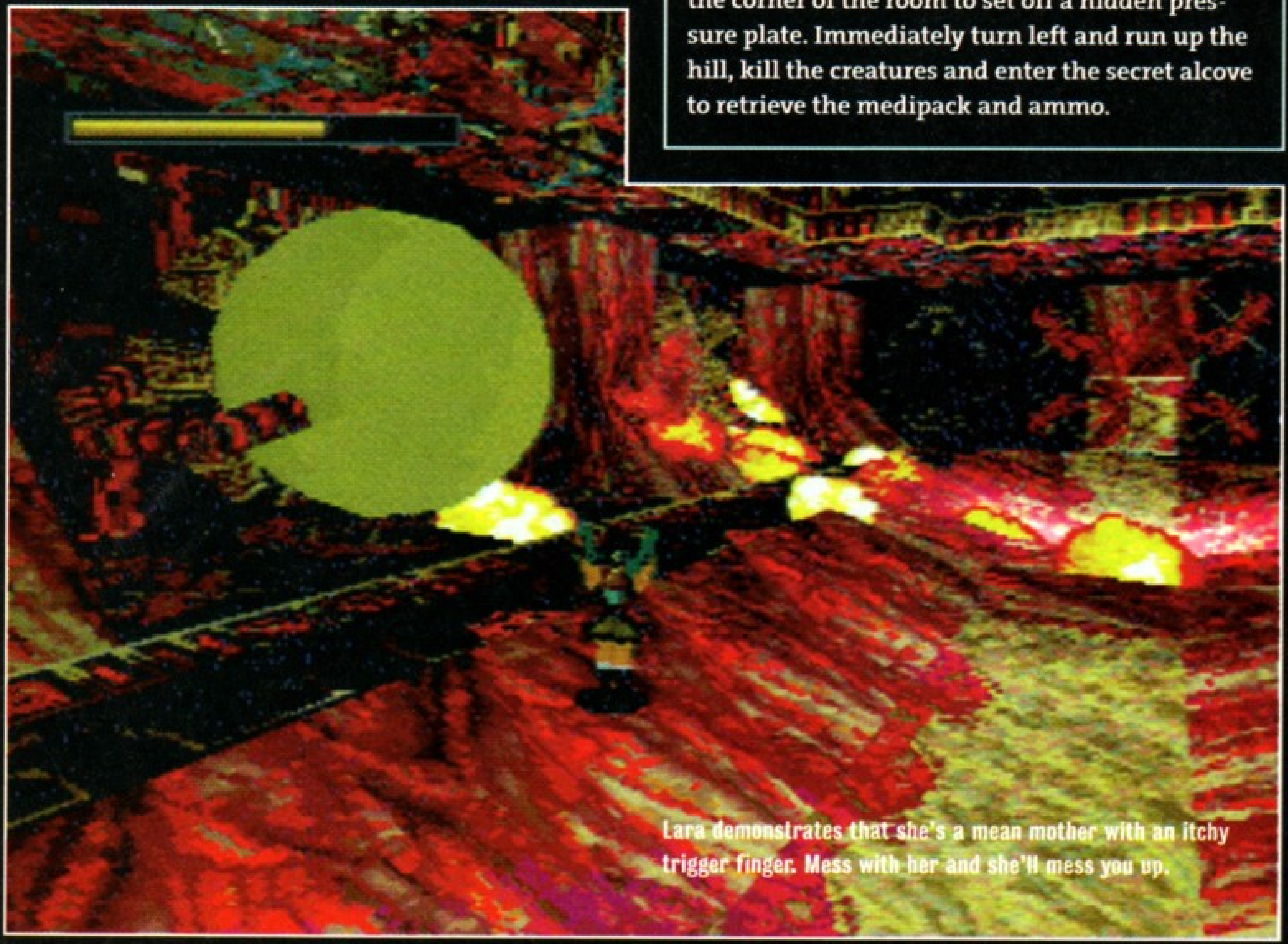
Turn left and push the block twice, turn right and run down the tunnel to find two switches. Pull the right-hand switch and immediately jump back, drop into the trap door. Leap over the pit to trigger a boulder, then jump back over the pit. After the boulder falls into the pit, jump over the pit again and run up the tunnel. Climb onto the ledge to the left and pull the switch. Turn around and climb up to the door, drop down the other side and run forward through the door. Run through the tunnel and kill the creature in the corner. Pull the switch in the opposite corner and collect the ammo before entering the door and saving your game. Slide down the ramp into the next room, shoot the two creatures at the bottom and run into the room. Don't shoot the tall alien or you will be killed. Instead, turn right and climb up onto the ledge, leap across to the stone pillar. Jump to the ledge by the door, pull the switch and turn around. Leap over to the sandy ledge. Climb up and jump onto the sandy pillar. Run and jump over to the other pillar, walk onto the middle of the ledge and you'll force your double to fall into the pit. Return to the rocky ledge by the pit and climb the tunnel, kill the centaur and collect the ammo. Kill the alien that jumps out at you, then run to the end of the tunnel and turn right . Follow the ledge and pull the switch, turn around and run across the other ledge and activate a second switch. Return to the entrance and run across the bridge into the final chamber. Run forward to the spinning machine, grab the ammo and press the action button.

SECRETS

1. From the beginning, run forward and the sphere on your left will explode. Shoot the creature that comes out. Turn around and walk toward the sphere on the right, and kill the creature. Run forward along the trench and a third sphere will explode, kill the creature as you did the rest. Face the centre door and turn left, run through the side door and climb the stairs toward the webbed floor. Run over the central bridge and grab the ammo. Quickly draw your weapon and dispose of the flying demon, then run into the far right corner of the webbed floor. Enter the alcove and pull the switch, turn around and run forward into another alcove. Activate the second switch, run back to the other side of the room and enter a new doorway. Travel down the steps and hit the third switch, return to the entrance chamber and walk through the central door. Shoot the flying demon then run forward to the edge. Drop off the ledge to the one below, enter the secret tunnel and grab the medipack and the ammo.

2. From the first save beacon, jump over to the pillar, turn left and jump to the lowest ledge on the side of the pyramid. Quickly jump to the next ledge, turn right and jump to a third ledge and slide down. Climb up the ledge to the secret area in the upper right corner and collect the medipack and ammo.

3. Jump the ledge in the corner and activate the switch, return to the lava room and jump back to the entrance ledge. Turn left and jump to the pillar, turn left and jump to the column. Turn left and jump to the second pillar, now leap across to the doorway in the wall. Climb up and pull the switch at the end of the tunnel. Return to the tunnel entrance and jump to the left pillar, leap across the pillars and enter the tunnel. Follow the tunnel into a long hallway. Walk into the corner of the room to set off a hidden pressure plate. Immediately turn left and run up the hill, kill the creatures and enter the secret alcove to retrieve the medipack and ammo.

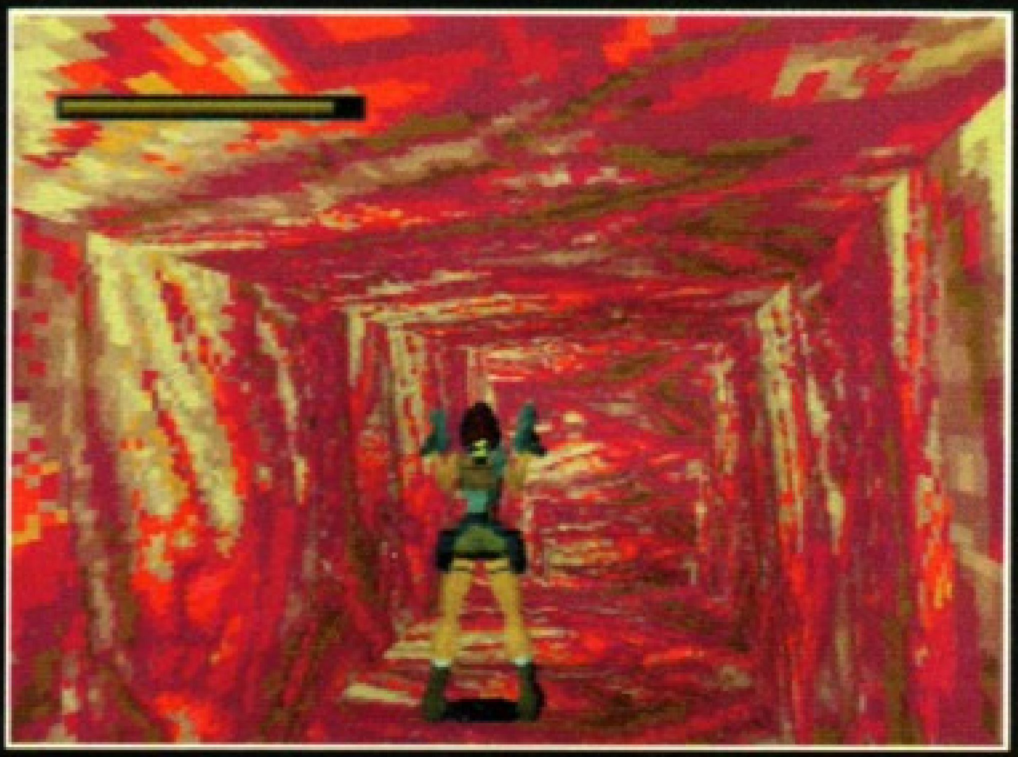


Lara demonstrates that she's a mean mother with an itchy trigger finger. Mess with her and she'll mess you up.

THE GREAT PYRAMID

From where you begin, shoot the huge monster, grab the ammo and enter the red tunnel. Slide down the slope and push the block at the bottom three times. Run up the slope and push the second block once. Climb into the tunnel above and save your position.

Run past the slicer and follow the tunnel, turn right at the intersection and push the block once. Return to the intersection and turn right, run past the red door and drop into the next room. Pull the block backwards once, then turn around and climb back into the tunnel. Turn left, move down and push the block once. Return to the red door and stand on the block and pull the switch. Turn around and run into the next room, turn right and jump to the dark





ledge. Jump to the second and third ledges, run through the tunnel until you see a boulder. Run back to the door to avoid the boulder. Run up the tunnel again until you see a second boulder, avoid the same way as before. Run to the end of the tunnel and make your way past the collapsing tile. Grab onto the ledge before you fall and make sure your health full up. While hanging from the hole, drop down to the floor below and run around the corner and save your position.

Shoot the Scion until it blows up. Turn and run through the door, shoot the three creatures then hang and drop through the hole in the wall. Turn





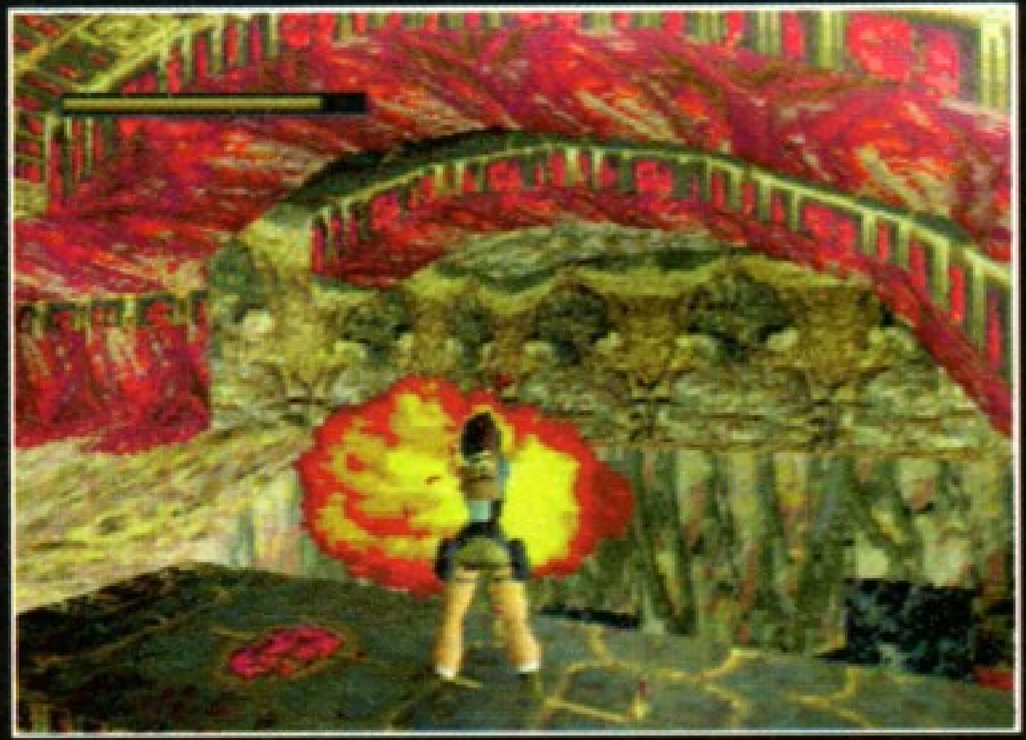

Even though he has no legs, the final boss is very tough indeed. If he grabs hold of you he smashes your skull on the floor.



With the end in sight, our weary heroin must destroy the Scion (above) for no other reason than it looks pretty cool (below).




around and jump across to the crevice, shuffle right and drop down the slope. Jump at the bottom of the slope to avoid the lava, then enter the door. Walk to the right side of the hill and down to the bottom which will activate a boulder. Now walk to the swinging blade and jump across to the ledge. Walk past the spikes to the middle of the ledge, face the doorway and perform a standing jump followed by a running jump to reach the door. Grab onto the crevice in the left-hand wall and shuffle right to the far edge. Drop down and walk to the middle of the



Lara's curry fetish reaches its peak. After eating a Bangladesh backside burner she finds it difficult to conceal her bad breath.



ledge and back up to the edge. Jump back wards onto the slope and jump forward to the pillar, then save at the beacon.

Turn right and jump down into the tunnel, run forward across the three collapsing ledges and run into the tunnel behind the swinging blade. Turn right and enter the hallway, run down the slope and outrun the boulder. Jump over the boulder and grab the medipack, jump over the boulder again and turn right. Slide down the slope when the blade is on either side and jump from the end of the slope to a ledge. Drop down into the tunnel and run forward, retrieve the medipack and continue through the tunnel door. Pull the switch to open the door and go through. Turn right and collect the ammo, turn around and run forward to the lava hole. Let the boulder roll over you, then leap cross to the other side and grab onto the edge. Let the second boulder pass, then climb up and run to the next room. Drop down into the pool of water below, take the ammo and swim through the tunnel into a new room. Climb up out of the water and save your game.

Take the uzi ammo then run to the large chamber. Use the uzi to kill the final boss of the game, Natla. Back up and watch Natla, when she arises shoot her again. Run up the ramp in the corner and follow it up to the top. Jump across to the pillar then over to the next. Jump to the pillar below the door and climb up. Follow the path and drop down the hole onto a pillar, turn right and jump across to the ledge. Climb up and follow the tunnel forward to a slope which you can slide down to complete the game at last.

So now that you've completed the game you can stick it on top of your TV to collect dust, right? WRONG. The game has only just begun. Now you are awarded with infinite ammunition and action mode. What this means is that you can now go back over the game and find that it is harder and with more monsters. Excellent replay value, eh?



COIN-OPERATED

The first game to employ Capcom's new CP-System III arcade board, Red Earth is yet another 2D beat 'em up, but this time it's a bit different. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE pulls on its collective fighting trousers to investigate.

While the long awaited Street Fighter III is still some way away, Capcom's R&D department have not been slacking off. Its latest creation is the CP-System III board, essentially a CD-ROM powered beast capable of super smooth animation, wild sprite manipulation effects and some fancy zooming on the side. So after recent diversions into the action (Resident Evil) and puzzle (Puzzle Fighter) genres, what game has Capcom developed to show off its new piece of kit? Another beat 'em up. Tsk, typical.

But hold on, because Red Earth is not 'just another beat 'em up'. Sure it looks like a beat 'em up, and plays like one too, but Red Earth is different from the rest because it incorporates elements from a genre at the other end of the gaming spectrum, the RPG. Only four characters, detailed elsewhere in this feature, are selectable, and in the one player Quest Mode they have eight adversaries to defeat before the game is completed.

Unusually for a beat 'em up, the selectable characters don't fight each other in Quest Mode. Instead they all have a personal reason for taking on the might of the Evil Empire, which is trying to take over the world. After each fight, how well you performed translates into experience points, which upgrade your character by improving their attack and defence strength and allowing new moves to be accessed. Once a certain amount of experience points have been amassed, your character's rank is also increased, up to a maximum of level 32.



MYSTIC MEG

Like the majority of Capcom's recent beat 'em ups, Red Earth contains spectacular Super moves. This time, however, they don't rely on pulling off standard special moves to charge up a Super gauge.

Instead, your character collects Mystic Orbs from crates that randomly appear in the playing area. Six types of orbs (fire, ice, thunder, poison, wind and earth) are available, and all have varying effect when used.

Players can use orbs in two ways. One is to pull off a character's unique special attack, which is accessed by two fireball motions and a punch, and the other method is to draw on the power of the orb itself, which produces the same result which ever character you are using, and is invoked by a backwards fireball motion and all three punch buttons. This introduces a tactical element into battles, as you cannot rely on charging a Super gauge to pull off Supers and, in two player battles at least, you can prevent the other player from collecting orbs by nicking them all for yourself.

PASSWORD PROTECTION

Considering that players can power their characters up way beyond their basic attributes, it would be a bit of a pain if you had to start again at level one every time you played. Fortunately, Red Earth uses a unique password system, so you can continue from where you left off. At the end of every game you are given a numerical password, which can then be re-entered at the start of a new game. The only problem with this system is remembering an eight figure password, so be sure to take a Biro down to the arcade with you. >>













(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE) The hideous Egyptian monster Rarange baying his little heart out; Hauzer the dinosaur wins again (with those talons we're not surprised); Kenji tries to intimidate octopoid sea monster Hydron with a length of old chain; Rarange gets nasty with his flame throwing head; and shows why his defensive powers are second to none with what looks suspiciously like a large shield.











(ABOVE LEFT) These fantastic swirly backgrounds are only possible with the CP-System III board. Here, Mai Ling is powering up her standard Super attack.
(ABOVE RIGHT) As usual, Capcom's artists couldn't resist a few gratuitous panty shots.





Hydron feels the power of the Wind Super, as modelled by Tessa.




Exciting intermission shots here as Kenji has a good chat.



>> QUEST MODE

The actual mechanics of the Quest Mode differ slightly from most beat 'em ups. For a start, your character has two energy bars, while your opponent's stretches across the entire length of the screen. If you are defeated and choose to continue, your adversary continues with the amount of energy it had left when you were killed. If you win, your energy is replenished depending on how well you fought, so if you did badly, expect to start the next round with a tiny slice of energy. Players can collect extra lives and Mystic Orbs during fights and these are delivered via crates, which appear randomly on each stage. Pull off a spectacular attack, and extra experience points may also be yours for the taking.

There are eight monsters to defeat to win the game, the first four are the initial nemeses of each selectable characters, and are fought in a different order depending on who you choose to play as. These first four monsters are Kongou, a mutant ninja who is also in the employ of Kenji's master; Lavia, a harpy who was responsible for the destruction of Mai Ling's village; Hydron, an octopus-like creature who is threatening the inhabitants of Tessa's home town and Hauzer, a giant dinosaur left behind by the empire to rule over Leo's country.

After this you tackle Ravance, a four-headed Sphinx based in a stage resembling Ancient Egypt, then Gi Gi a Stone Idol, whose home is a crypt on the Eastern continent. Finally your quest leads you to a floating island, where you will encounter a fearsome, and extremely well-armed, robot, and Varuda, an old man accompanied by several mythical beasts who has a few nasty surprises up his sleeves.



Here's the Poison Super, identified by the purple background.






VS MODE

Two player battles are much more conventional, being fought over three rounds with just one energy bar. The Mystic Orb system remains the same, but there are no experience points or life-ups to worry about. Disappointingly, it appears that only the four one-player characters are available in two-player mode. We hope there is a way of playing the awesome boss characters, but if it exists it hasn't been revealed yet.

BONUS GAMES

Red Earth features the welcome return, from the original Street Fighter II, of between level Bonus Rounds. We've discovered two so far, a variant on the old SFII car smashing round with a large statue to demolish, and another where there are six stone heads set into the walls of Gi Gi's crypt at various heights, and players must destroy them all to win.

BOARD GAME

The CP-System III is roughly four times as powerful as the old CP-System II board. The new hardware can handle 256 colours per sprite, and with a total of 512 colour palettes, that means it can display up to 32,768 colours on-screen. Backgrounds can have up to five levels of line scrolling, and the amount of data that can be stored on the board ranges from 772Mbit to 1200Mbit. Compared to the 322Mbit available on CP-System II, you can see why the new board has the capacity for such smooth animation. As well as Red Earth, Capcom has developed Street Fighter III for its new board, but beyond this, other CP-System III titles have yet to be revealed.






Whenever your character's power level is increased, you get treated to a lovely bit of Capcom artwork. Details of new techniques and increased attributes are also provided. If you're lucky, you may also gain resistance to certain attacks!



The character select screen in all its glory. Is there a cheat to play the bosses though?



Tessa on the offensive again, giving Mai Ling something to think about with the Ice Super. That's a power-up crate by Mai Ling's feet – use a low attack!

INTRODUCING

TESSA A beautiful witch studying everything there is to know about Super Magic. Her weapons are magical, created by her own hand. She is a master of ice magic, and her most powerful moves involve firing deadly spears of ice at her opponent. As Tessa becomes more powerful, she gains the ability to pull off some of her moves in the air.

LEO A beneficent king whose land was overrun by the Evil Empire. A curse was placed on him, giving him the body of a beast, so he is fighting to regain not only his country, but also his humanity. He is armed with a sword and shield, and as he rises through the levels his weapons are upgraded. Although Leo is quite slow, most of his special attacks are based on dash moves. His default Mystic power is Thunder.

KENJI Leader of an ancient clan of ninja, Kenji is fighting to protect the Tokugawa dynasty. He conceals many weapons about his person, including knives and a length of chain which he uses as a whip. As you power him up, Kenji is able to perform another type of super jump in addition to deadly new moves. His standard Mystic Orb type is Poison.

MAI LING A young, gifted martial artist whose home town was destroyed by the Empire. She wears flaming rings on her legs which act as her weapons. She seems to have the least new moves to learn as you power her up, but she is able to dash in the air when you reach Level Ten. Mai Ling is the smallest and fastest character, and has Fire Orbs by default.



WHEN'S IT OUT

Well technically, Red Earth is out now. We've seen it in arcades around London, and it won't be long before you'll be able to play it all over the country. The possibility of a Saturn version looks highly unlikely as Capcom has already stated that no home system can handle the power of the CPS III board. The fact that the Saturn version of Marvel Super Heroes has suffered various delays does not bode well for a home conversion of Red Earth any time soon. Considering the power of the CP-System III, any home version would be severely compromised in terms of animation, and some sprite effects which the Saturn just can't handle. But fear not, if the Saturn can't do it, then there's no way the PlayStation can either.



(ABOVE) The Street Fighter II style Bonus Game has players giving a priceless statue a good kicking. Vandals, the lot of them.
(BELOW) Hydron is not impressed by the poor range of Kenji's sword.



The Fire Super is Mai Ling's default attack. She looks like she enjoys giving Tessa a toasting too.













OUT NOW

GRID RUN
BY VIRGIN £34.99 79%

Virgin Interactive Entertainment are to be credited for at least trying something different with Grid Run. At the heart of the game is an extremely simple concept, that being to "capture the flag" and not be IT. Basically, there's a number of flags to get, with your opponent's task being to get the flag off you (if you have it). It's all very simple, one-on-one stuff. It's extremely simple, yet strangely compelling. And it's pretty cheap too, which isn't too shabby.

The bottom line is though that perhaps Grid Run is too simple for its own good. After all, you didn't spend upwards of £200 to play games like Grid Run, despite its fairly impressive 3D visuals. The two-player mode is a welcome addition, but to be honest, it's not that much more exciting than the solo mode, which is a good indication of how good the CPU artificial intelligence is.

Overall, Grid Run is a nice attempt at trying something different and although its simplicity is probably its greatest virtue (leading to some amount of gaming excitement), it's also the best reason why it's not really worth your money.



CRUSADER: NO REMORSE
BY EA £44.99 68%

EA are definitely on the right track by getting Origin (the western world's adventure game experts) to bring their wares onto the Saturn. The Ultima series is rightly celebrated as one of the best RPG series ever to hit PC screens. Crusader: No Remorse was also hailed by the PC press, combining the gore and some of the action of Doom with the adventure expertise that Origin have continually displayed.

Well, that was obviously the idea. Unfortunately, this merging of ideas hasn't really paid off. To begin with, by Saturn standards the graphics in Crusader are absolutely monstrous. There's nothing here that the Megadrive couldn't do and I've certainly seen supe-



rior scrolling on the 16-bit machine - the jerky mess we have here just isn't good enough, PC conversion or not. The Saturn's 2D prowess is criminally underused here... even the full-motion video is not particularly impressive.

On the plus side, there's plenty of game for your money and the adventure itself is quite entertaining, if a tad lacking in the variety arena.

This isn't particularly the best entrance from Origin, particularly as the same company has been responsible for some gaming epics such as Wing Commander, Privateer 2 and Ultima, all of which would have been far more welcome than this disappointing effort.

MARIO ANDRETTI RACING
BY EA £44.99 83%

When it comes to racing games, Saturn owners can't really go wrong. After all, with good conversions of Daytona USA and Sega Rally Championship (along with a most promising conversion in the form of Manx TT Superbike) in the bag, for something to come along and seriously impress us is a demanding proposition.

Mario Andretti Racing actually has a lot going for it. The 3D, although lacking in detail in some areas, is very smooth and the wealth of tracks available is very, very impressive. The usual EA Sports presentational frippery is beyond compare too, with the option to just about completely redefine your car being most welcome indeed. Add a choice of Indy Car and NASCAR vehicles and you have a potentially deep simulation.

Gameplay-wise, Mario Andretti is pretty playable. Like all good racing games, it takes a fair old while to get the measure of the handling, but what the game offers is solid entertainment.



In terms of excitement and visual panache, Andretti's not so cool and the PAL translation is flakey (make that virtually non-existent). That's probably the worst thing about Andretti. Still, it's smoother than the PlayStation version, which always goes down well in our books.

Not essential, but certainly no disaster, this is a creditable EA release which bodes well for future titles.

TILT!
BY VIRGIN £34.99 85%

You might notice that the overall rating for Tilt! has decreased a little since last month. This isn't down to any revelation about the game's quality, more to do with a difference in opinion. Paul Glancey was well impressed with this, but I (Rich) have to admit that pinball



games just don't turn me on. With all of the 3D (and indeed 2D) power at the Saturn's disposal, I just think that something more inventive and entertaining could issue forth from Virgin.

Admittedly, pinball simulations don't really get that much more entertaining than this. The realistic dynamics are pretty impressive with the ball actually moving and ricocheting just like the real thing. The range and content of the tables themselves is also pretty cool.

The thing is, though... well, the Saturn is a videogames machine. As far as I'm concerned that should open up a whole new arena of potential for this genre. Take Megadrive Devil Crash (or Dragon's Fury as it was known in the UK). That managed to successfully mix videogames elements with the skill of pinball and personally I rank that as being superior to this. If realism is really what you want, I'd recommend spending a couple of quid on a variety of tables available at your local arcade rather than lay out £35 for this.

SOVIET STRIKE
BY EA £TBA 90%

GAME OF THE MONTH — SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

The Strike series was clearly a huge success for Electronic Arts and the company have finally seen fit to continue that excellence on the next generation machines, with the Sega Saturn getting the best version! Which is pretty cool eh readers?

So what's the deal then? Well, basically Soviet Strike continues the gameplay principles established in previous Strikes. The difference is that this Saturn game does everything so much better with more weapons and far, far superior graphics. The "photo-realistic" visuals really are stunning to behold and there are some awesome explosions and what-not to appreciate. The overall look is excellent - in fact, the only downer is the quality of the scrolling. Because of the dynamic loading from the CD, the scrolling suffers from a pretty low frame rate and dire scrolling. Still, the sheer excellence of the gameplay more than makes up for it.

EA have also done us proud with a fairly decent PAL conversion, but more to the point, they have cleaned up all of the problems the PlayStation version had. The gameplay balance has been improved, there are some super-weapons to find, plus there's a general improvement in the level of tidiness. It's all very impressive. Overall, the scrolling is irritating, but everything else about the game that is Soviet Strike is pure class. That being the case maybe you should just go out and buy it eh?





OUT NOW

DIE HARD ARCADE
BY SEGA £44.99 80%

Hmmmm... Here's a game that's going to cause some controversy. You see, Die Hard Arcade looks like being one of the Saturn's finest hours when you first boot up the machine. The game's basically Streets of Rage in 3D but with even more outrageous fighting action. It looks superb, the update is very smooth and the overall playability is excellent.



The game really is brilliant fun. What sets this apart from Streets of Rage and its 2D brethren is the effort that AM1 have put into the control method. They have successfully melded aspects of Virtua Fighter into the basic Final Fight style of gameplay, meaning that the biggest challenge the game offers is mastering the myriad techniques. Also, there are several different moves available depending on what you're carrying in your hands, which again increases the game's opportunities still further.

The big problem is lastability. For a start, the actual length of the game is disappointingly short. This would be all right were it not for the amount of credits given, plus the bonus game's propensity to hand out scores of extra credits (this Deep Scan arcade conversion is cool, but it just limits lastability even further). Some game modes to play as the meanies would have been cool, but really Die Hard Arcade needs extra stages - even novice gamers can blast their way through the entire game in less than hour and apart from discovering the

As it is, what we have is a supremely enjoyable but short-lived game. The real challenge probably is to get through on one credit. It's just a shame the game throws so many at you! Even a HARD difficulty setting would have been appreciated, but even this is missing from the game, hampering lastability still further.

Die Hard Arcade is a clear indication that some games work far better as coin-ops and regardless of the quality of the conversion need major work to be successful home titles.

DIE HARD TRILOGY
BY EA £44.99 90%

This game was a massive success on the PlayStation and Probe Software have finally got around to completing the Saturn rendition of this hugely popular title. As you can gather from the title, this game successfully brings the action and excitement of all three Die Hard films to the Saturn.



Die Hard is a decent, 14 level excursion into the skyscraper headquarters of the Nakatomi corporation. This is decent Fade to Black style action, albeit with huge blasting overtones, which is as it should be. Die Harder is solidly entertaining Virtua Cop style action. Of course, this isn't a patch on the AM2 games, but it's certainly a worthy addition to the pack. Finishing off the "thrillogy" is Die Hard with a Vengeance, a driving game through the streets of New York (although there's a disturbing lack of skyscrapers - haven't the programmers even seen NY?). Still, this is probably the most entertaining episode of the lot as you track down various bombs and generally cause much road-based havoc. With all three games on a single CD, it's difficult to avoid recommending this title. Yes, it's a bit jerkier than the PlayStation version (a shame Probe couldn't match the quality of the Alien Trilogy port) but the fun and excitement remains and that's what is important.



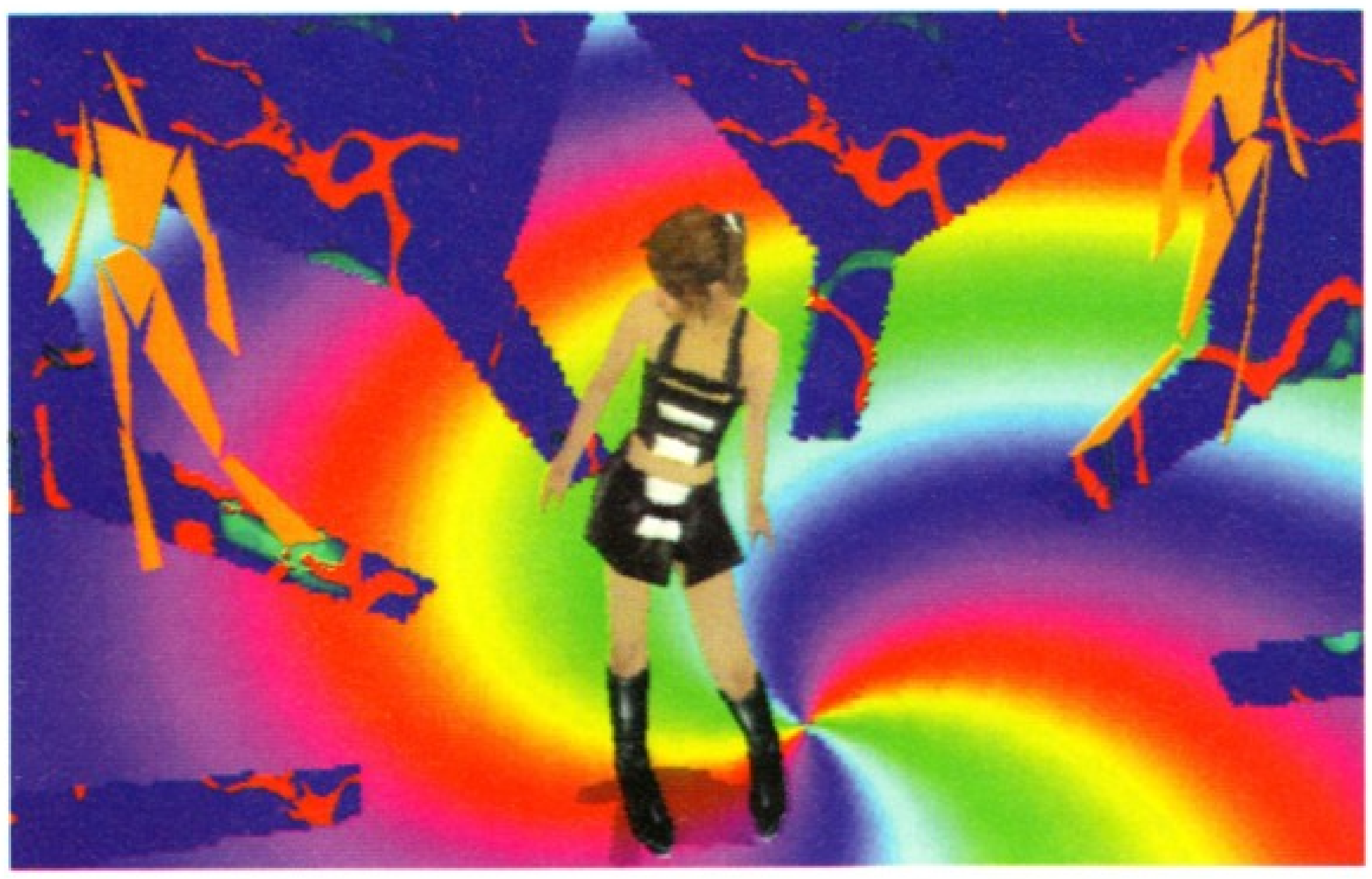
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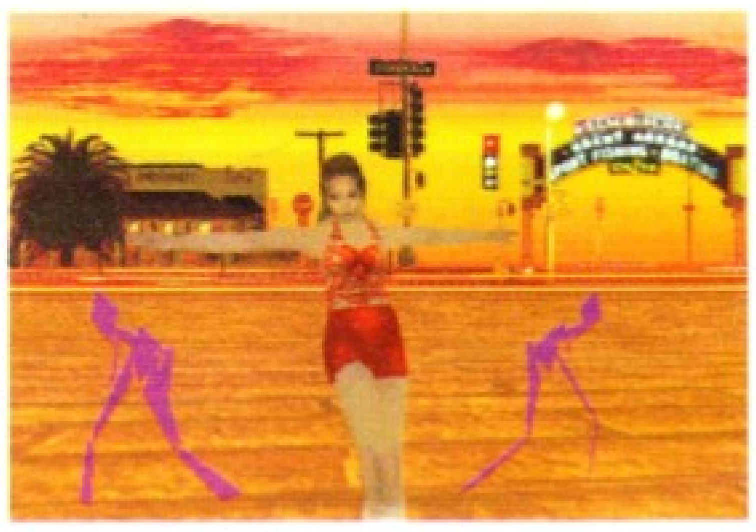
Introducing...

DIGITAL DANCE MIX

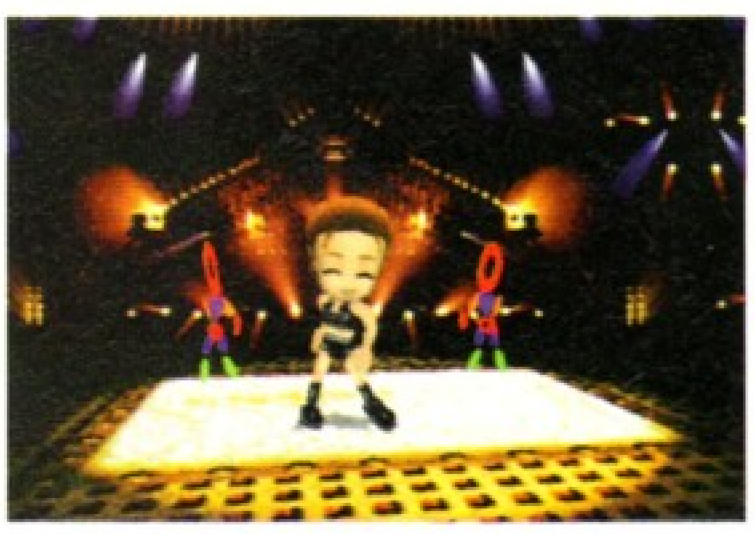
Some people are viewing Digital Dance Mix as some kind of benchmark as to what the VF3 characters could look like. But what if the cart upgrade rumours are true...?











Yu Suzuki's concept title for the Saturn hit Japanese shelves in early January and as expected, it's well... a bit weird. For a start, there's no point at all calling Digital Dance Mix a "game" as such - try Virtual Music Video and you'll be closer to the mark.

The centrepiece of Digital Dance Mix is the 3D rendered version of Japanese pop siren Namie Amuro - AM2 have created a high resolution 3D model of the singer and animated her with some excellent motion capture, all at a super-smooth 60 frames per second. The result looks lovely indeed, with extra animation provided by some 2D polygon dancers mimicking her movements in the background. Incidentally, a great deal of the look of the video can be customised. There are a few different Amuro costumes to choose from (the colours are also selectable), along with a choice of backgrounds and such and such. You can zoom in and out to your heart's content and spin around the action as much as you want... which is just as well considering that there's little else to do in Digital Dance Mix. There are a few mini-games for you to examine (see the relevant screenshots), but in the end Dance Mix is spectacularly without point, unless you're really in Namie Amuro - and sales of over 100,000 in Japan would seem to indicate that the market does exist.

This is a pretty brave idea for Sega of Japan but at around the equivalent of £20, this Virtual Pop Video is very expensive considering what it offers.

But what if the VPV was given away "free" as part of, say, a CD single? Who knows? Digital Dance Mix may well pave the way for a new use for the Saturn. As it is, Yu Suzuki hasn't given up on his current concept yet - next in line for Japanese consumers is a Digital Dance Mix volume II, featuring Sarah and Pai from Virtua Fighter! Nnnargh!





Press buttons in time to the music! Wow!



A boring shape-matching mini-game.



Just run about and find Namie!



Match up the Amuro cards in this mini-game.

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NEXT MONTH...

True excitement gains magazine form with next month's SSM. Resident Evil is explored in more detail, Syndicate Wars gets a closer look, plus we'll have reviews of the like of Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo, Independence Day... plus a whole load more! Let there be no doubt about the *POWER* of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE!

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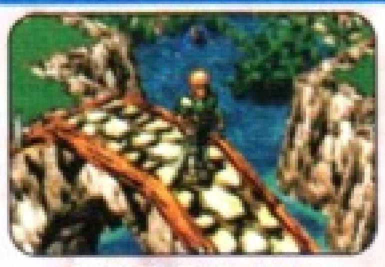
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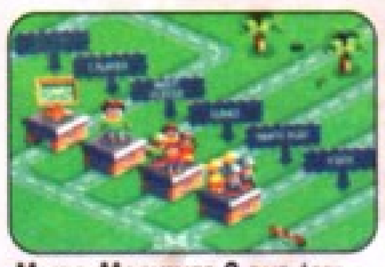
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Dark Saviour due Feb


Syndicate Wars due April


Soviet Strike due April


Motocross Int'l due April


Micro Machines 3 due April

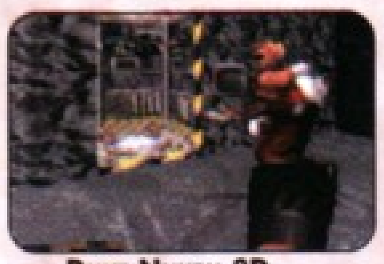

NHL Powerplay due March


Blast Chamber due June


FIFA '97 due April


NBA Live '97 due March


Heart of Darkness due May


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SATURN GAMES

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BUBBLE BOBBLE/RAINBOW



ACTUA GOLF



ALIEN TRILOGY

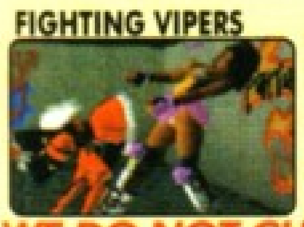


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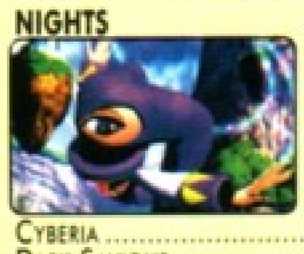


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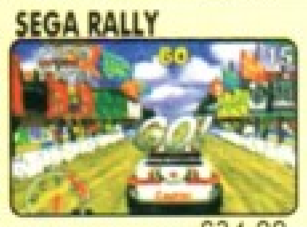


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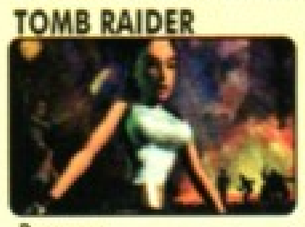


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7. ACTUA GOLF
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